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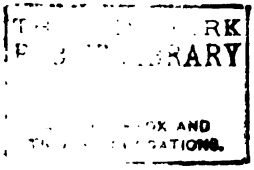
WHAT I HAVE SEEN WHILE FISHING

AND

HOW I HAVE CAUGHT MY FISH


RK
RARY
AND

Sutcliffe] [*Whitby.*

Yours truly
Philip Green

WHAT I HAVE SEEN WHILE FISHING AND HOW I HAVE CAUGHT MY FISH

By PHILIP GEEN

WITH SEVENTY-THREE ILLUSTRATIONS

SECOND IMPRESSION

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
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TO

THE LONDON ANGLERS,

WHO FOR TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS HAVE DONE ME THE

HONOUR OF ELECTING ME

PRESIDENT OF THE ANGLERS' ASSOCIATION,

AND WHO, DURING THAT PERIOD,

HAVE MADE MY DUTIES IN THAT CAPACITY EVER PLEASANT,

I GRATEFULLY

Dedicate this Book.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE first edition sold so quickly that only half of the kindly Press Notices were in time to aid in its sale.

So numerous were the letters of appreciation and orders for further copies that a second edition became a matter of course.

I have striven successfully to cope with letters from my readers asking for advice as to places and fishing gear, and many of my lines and traces have gone in samples.

It is a pleasure to me to aid a brother sportsman, and I hope to be equal to replying to those who may not get all the information they may require from this new edition.

P. G.

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I place pollack first among the fishes, by a long way first, for men who desire, with an absolute rest from business thoughts, unlimited lung luxuries and yet to have glorious sport.

My memory wanders back some forty years to my first day among the pollack on the Copperas Rocks at Combe Martin, in my native county of Devon. Since that time I have caught this, the boldest biter and the bravest fighter of all sea animals, in almost every county that has rocky coasts.

My upbringing in Devon unfitted me for life in cities, and I have sympathy for all who are compelled to live in them. It gave me a love of Nature and sport that must be gratified. The mere odour of the earth, or the scent of bruised grass, excites me more than the biggest of money deals; and this love must be as old as I am myself. I have no knowledge of a time when I would not hunt for a rare bird's nest or catch a trout in preference to toddling off to school.

I was always happy in the fields; so happy that I was not always able to answer the inquiry as to how I had "got into that state," nor to recollect whether it was the paddling in the stream or the hunt through the long wet grass for the noisy land-rail's nest that was most responsible for it. Accidents will occur in meadows in summer-time, when the ditches are grown up to be so much like the high grass that the difference is not discerned until

Photo by] [*W. K. Geen.*

"POLLACK, THE BOLDEST BITER AND THE BRAVEST FIGHTER."

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you are in. When your head comes up from such a fall your hair is matted with weedy slime, and it is only a mother that could lecture and kiss you then.

I had learned a little of many sports before I was considered strong enough to be shut up in school, and I could get hair from a colt's tail, soak it and make a line, before I knew the alphabet all the way from A to Z. With my hair-line, a worm, and a withy stick, I felt as proud as the mightiest warrior could in all the glory of his trappings, and great was my pride when at last I outwitted the monster half-pound trout by taking off my shoes, wading up behind, and dropping my bait just over the bough under which he kept his nose.

Ferreting rabbits, or even rats, was a fascination that I had no will to withstand; and when I was a little older anything that had four legs would be in danger of a hard day's work on the moor when there was a meet there. The moor was a never-failing wonder-place I could explore with unabated pleasure from the rising of the sun until the going down thereof, or until my little legs gave way and rest was imperative.

> "God gives all men all earth to love,
> But, since man's heart is small,
> Ordains for each one spot shall prove
> Beloved over all."

How sweet and soft was the heather! Yet softer and sweeter still the couch of ling, where the

happy, busy bees sang such drowsy cooing lullabies that I have heard, or seemed to hear, my mother's rest-song, and have put up my hand to reach the ear that I had held so often. A little longer I heard the twitter of the birds and the tiny voice of the brook, and then a darkening cloud, and I slept. When I wake it is with the odour of my sweet surroundings filling my nostrils, with the balsam of health in every whiff; but my little stomach is as empty as it can be, and I must perforce go home, and leave the now rising trout, as I have quite a doubling-up void that is like to bring my chin and knees together.

I know not how much—the debt is too great to calculate—I owe to these youthful tramps and dreams. Life is sweet. They gave me life, a long life, and a store of happy memories. I was a weedy skewer of a boy, with an abnormally large head that no boy's hat would cover: a head so large that my mother was ever ready to believe that it ached too badly for school; and if my father, as he did at times, ventured to remark that I should "grow up a dunce," mother would go to him and whisper something which would free me from the dread of books and teachers for yet another day. Mother would never tell me what that potent whisper was, but my father would at such times give sly peeps at me, headwards, before giving way, and I sometimes feared he would see it was not aching so very much. It really did ache at times,

and no wonder, as there was little else of me to be in trouble.

Strange it is, but my very worst pain would vanish when I was seated on my Exmoor pony by my father's side for a day with the deer; and I was proud when Parson Jack — the Reverend John Russell—said, "That's a nice thing the boy is riding, George." Indeed, I was so proud that I did a silly thing. I touched the pony with the spur, and the pony told the parson, and his reverence rebuked me with: "Be jealous of and kind to your steed, my boy, at all times, and especially when going a-hunting, for you may need, before night, every step that he has in him." With this he stroked his horse's neck with loving touch, and, unseen by him or my father, I stroked my pony's; and I think from that time I loved all animals more than I had done before.

I often wondered what were the magic words of my mother's whispering, but I had to grow to manhood before I could solve the riddle. After much time my semi-wild life, my mother's cakes and clotted cream, with now and then a junket, filled me out a bit, and I was no longer a walking-stick with a big copper knob. Up to now I had hated boys, both big and small, as I knew they noticed—sometimes in a loud voice—the colour of my hair. As I grew in strength these audible notices grew less and less frequent, and I had to partially lift my cap and scratch my head, as if I

had a tickling there, to provoke them to the old familiar cries. Another sort of courage, and a greater, came to me at this time. I could hold my head to the other sex. Maiden cheeks no longer rounded out with threatening laughter, as they used to do, at sight of my figure and utter shyness. All rules have exceptions—even where ladies are concerned—and there was a pretty face that had never laughed at me. It was from her that I learned what my mother had whispered. The maiden married, had a boy, a long, bony, big-headed boy; and her boy's head sometimes ached, and he had frequently to miss school; and when the father expostulated, she would whisper, as my mother no doubt had whispered, "Don't be cross; I am afraid that terribly big head and its constant aches may mean 'water on the brain.'"

I think my readers will forgive me these few lines on my early life, as it was my Devon blood, with its probable taint of superstition, and my upbringing, that made me sympathetic with Irish life and Irishmen. This will explain much that would otherwise seem unreal to those who have only seen the blarneying side of the Irish character. Mine was a real sympathy, and it unlocked their tongues upon subjects which, to them, are almost too sacred to discuss with strangers.

CHAPTER II.

EUSTON TO KILLYBEGS—A QUAINT FELLOW-PASSENGER—DONEGAL TOWN—THE MAID'S MOTTO.

WE, one of my sons and I, started by the 8.30 A.M. from Euston for just another fishing tour in Ireland. I never think of Ireland without having in my mind the picture you get of it on approaching Kingstown. It has always fascinated me in such a way that, while my eyes are greedily taking in the lovely scene, I quite forget my whereabouts, until the brilliant green fields assert themselves. We had intended to sleep in Dublin, but, finding the beds of that city more than occupied, on account of the great motor-race fixed for the following day, we decided to take our sleep travelling—not a difficult task in a coach on the Great Northern Railway of Ireland.

Next to be admired after the policemen who direct the traffic at difficult crossings in London is the much-taxed, yet ever-patient, railway servant. While waiting for trains I have stood aside near an inner entrance gate and listened to the questions put to the man in charge, heard his civil answers, and wondered what his wages were. To say the

Irish railway officials are civil is quite inadequate; they have always appeared to me as sympathetically obliging as if they had a personal interest in your journey being a pleasant one.

We were soon provided with what was needed for our comfort, and ceased to regret that we had been disappointed of our Dublin beds; indeed, we were soon asleep, and slept so soundly that the stopping and re-starting affected us not. Our dreams continued until near morning, when there came a noise on the ear that it was impossible to assimilate, and, on looking up, I was confronted by a young Irishman, who, I thought, wore quite a ne'er-do-well look. With a smile all over his face he was saying, "Is it on the flure you would be having me tak a sate?" I had to rub my eyes and give my son a shake for some corroboration of the actuality of the situation. Pat's courtesy equalled the occasion, for he gave me time to settle the point while he sang:

> "With the fairest of daughters old Erin is blessed,
> And brave are the sons of this nation disthressed."

I suppose I was not looking so pleased as I ought, for the apparition said, "Are ye crass?" I replied that I was not quite sure, and that I should like to be fully awake before I decided. "Is that so?" said he; "then I'll do meself the pleasure of inquiring again." Then on he went with his song:

> "They've a wakeness, 'tis thrue, for John Jameson's best,
> Well, that's Irish, you know, that's Irish."

"Will either of ye gintlemen be having a drop of the crathur wid ye? If ye have, I'll be giving ye me opinion of that same free of charge"; and, on learning that we had not with us the material with which to trespass so far on his generosity, he blurted forth again, "Are ye crass?" My son was the first to see something comical in this inquiry, and Pat, seeing his smile, felt encouraged to ask of him, "Is the old gintleman vixed?"

By this time we had given up our comfortable horizontal positions for the perpendicular and were filling our pipes, while Pat had seated himself where my toes had been, and, with folded arms and nearly closed eyes, was about to show us how comfortable he was and how soon asleep, when his weasel eye caught sight of the pipes, and he with evident interest inquired, "Shall we be smoking?" I replied, "Why not?" For the next few minutes our visitor's eyes made steady journeys from one or other pipe-bowl to where the smoke spread out fan-like on the ceiling of the carriage, after which he inquired, "Shall I be smoking?" I replied, "Do." He considered, scratched his head, and said to himself, "Do, do"; then, after a short silence, he turned to my son with, "Shall I be smoking?" "Do," said he. This "do" Pat mumbled to himself again and again, evidently quite fogged as to its meaning, and there was something of an appeal in his next remark: "Ach, are ye both crass?" Then it dawned on me that Pat was longing for a smoke,

and wanted the loan of one of our pipes. I asked him if such was the case. "Begorra, that's thrue for ye, sorr." I gave him a cigar, between the pulls at which he sang another verse of his Irish song, and looked so completely Irish and happy that I inquired of Kirk, my son, if he could not manage to take his photo. "What! in this light?" and, as he said this, he looked at me compassionately. "If it's me picture ye wad be taking, you'll be quick, for I'll be laving ye at the next station, and your honours will be down-hearted for life if ye have nothing to remimber me by. Will ye do it while I jig to ye? It's me ane mither that knows I'm a divil at a jig. Niver me aqual in all Tyrone. It's only Tim Donnelly—may the divil put horns on his grandmother's ghost—that will tak the flure wid me; and, begorra, it was dhry in the mouth I was when he thought me bate entoirely." The mere thought of Tim Donnelly brought him to his feet, and, while dancing, he exclaimed, "Had I him here I could lepp his head." To show how easy that would be Pat would occasionally jump so high as to bring his head in touch with the roof, and his stick would twist and turn with such velocity that my eyes failed to follow its movements, and, fearing it might escape his fingers, I drew myself as near as might be into the innermost corner of the corner in which I sat.

Would this electric, dancing, gesticulating, happy-faced, singing wonder go on for ever, was the ques-

tion I was putting myself as we entered Omagh station to the refrain:

> "It's extraordinary, isn't it?
> It's most extraordinary, isn't it?
> Begorry and hurroo, ye divils, whilaloo."

When Pat had really gone, Kirk said to me: "It took you a long time, dad, to discover that our visitor was quite an artiste, a truly funny fellow, and by no means much, if any, the worse for drink. But there: what would his likeness be without the voice, actions, and inconceivably comic expressions of the original? I think a real Pat is like our Devonshire junkets—grandmother's junkets—eh, dad; with coverings of clotted cream taken carefully from the pan in which it has been scalded, and placed yellow side up, and then a little nutmeg grated over it. Pat does not bear transplanting any more than our junkets, and neither of them can be made elsewhere."

It is but a short distance from Omagh to the flourishing town of Strabane, which is favourably situated where the rivers Mourne and Finn unite to form the historically great Foyle. The town is most interesting, and its vicinity very picturesque, and I can highly recommend the Abercorn Arms as an up-to-date commercial hotel at which to stay. We changed at Strabane into a Donegal railway train, and were soon at Stranorlar Junction, where this railway branches fork-like up the vales of the Mourne and Finn to their respective terminations

at Killybegs and Glenties. Stranorlar, thus situated, is a base having command of two most excellent rivers, as well as of Lough Eask and Lough Finn. By staying at the Queen's Arms Hotel you will have unlimited free fishing for salmon and trout.

On leaving Stranorlar the line ascends rapidly for six miles, and there, at the summit, is Lough Mourne, about a mile in length and a quarter to half a mile in width. The line then descends through the most magnificent defile in Ireland, parts of which are really sublime. The train runs at times between mountains of red granite, and the gap between them is so narrow that you must wonder how the road, the river, and the railway can, without overlapping, pass through.

The next station we come to of which I can speak is Donegal Town, of which I have pleasant memories of a former visit some twenty-five years ago, when I had excellent sport with salmon and sea-trout in the river Eask and with the game brown trout in the lough of the same name. The town is beautifully situated at the head of one of the inlets of Donegal Bay, with easy access to miles of rocky coast, where I found pollack in numbers that apparently no rod-fishing could appreciably reduce. The town and neighbourhood are famous for historical associations. Here Hugh O'Donnell, after years of struggle, with varying fortunes, against the English, burnt the home of

his fathers, with Moscow-like sacrifice, and went to find a new one in Spain.

You may bring your families or your friends here assured of a welcome at the Arran Arms, where a friend of mine was made very comfortable last autumn; and while they, if not fishers, interest themselves in history and ruins at the Abbey, you can sing, "For to-morrow will be Friday," and go a-fishing.

We quite enjoyed our three hours' travelling through the beautifully varied scenes that encompass the line to Killybegs. The early morning air from the heather-clad hills was a most welcome refresher after a long night journey, and the kindly welcome and excellent breakfast served to us at the hotel gave us zest to enjoy our first view of the sea while standing on Irish soil.

It is more than probable that many intending visitors to this sport-giving country are exercised in mind by much that has been said and written in reference to food and cleanliness in Irish hotels. Until the last few years I, too, had a prejudice that took its first growth some twenty years since at a hotel in Ballina, where, having complained that my sleep was not so undisturbed as I could have wished, the unsatisfactory and curiosity-provoking excuse given me was that the chambermaid had a most excellent motto; and the tone of voice in which this excuse was given implied that a maid with such a motto must at least be forgiven. The

Moy was full of fish, but the maid's motto drove me from Ballina.

I have generally considered that time is wasted in talking of food and comforts; but when I find the following paragraph, taken from the *Pall Mall Gazette* (Sept. 15, 1903), going the round of the daily papers and getting thereby a wide circulation, and when I know that it is likely to convey impressions opposed to the truth, in fairness to all those hotels in the very district complained of, in which I received good food, cleanliness, and attention, I must say how sorry I feel for the poor man who, while finding a fortune in America, appears to have lost something far more valuable:—

"PAYING BOARDER IN AN IRISH WORKHOUSE.

"AMUSING INCIDENT.

"At the weekly meeting of the Donegal Board of Guardians yesterday a gentleman, named McGroary, who had returned to his native country, after making his fortune in America, asked to be admitted to the workhouse as a paying boarder, as he did not find the hotels in the north-west of Ireland to his liking. He offered a guinea per week for a room for himself. The master had already admitted him as an inmate, and the guardians yesterday unanimously approved the master's action. The applicant drove to the workhouse in a carriage and pair."

Poor fellow! Poor fortune!

I have friends whose gastronomic tastes have been so æsthetically trained by a few years of so-called first-class hotel life that the sight of a plate of undisguised undercut from a prime sirloin,

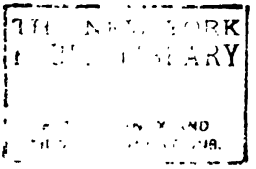
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Photo by] [*W. K. Geon.*

"STERN, WIND-SEARCHED AND WILD."

or the smell of a boiled leg of mutton with turnips, would cause them to lift their noses into the air. They pine unless they can finick for an hour or more with the fully disguised trifles that the French chef prepares from his economically purchased tinned dainties. They love the peculiar odour that comes from the ounce of fish that has a four-ounce coating of batter.

"A dinner for the gods, Geen," is their description of messes dipped by the same fingers into the same batter-tub in which the wee bit fish grew to such a size. They have forgotten the taste of freshly-cut-and-put-in-the-pot greens, cabbage, and cauliflower, as their mothers, with bared arms, used to cook them. When I remember that more than one of these friends came Londonwards from Devon about the time of my coming, I am inclined to say to them:—

"'Return ye to the ways of your fathers!' And this may be made easy; go with me to Ireland—I am going again—and sniff its Atlantic breezes and learn to be content once more with good, plain food. There you will be face to face with scenes that no pen can adequately describe, often so stern, wind-searched and wild that Nature's softeners, mosses and ferns, are unknown.

"At other times our road will lie through moors of sweet-smelling, vari-coloured bell heather, among which only the white variety is missing; and then down, down into a glen amidst the marsh marigolds,

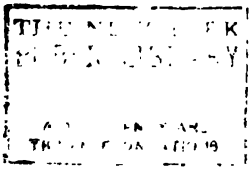
wild irises, fluttering blue-bells, and the other wild flowers innumerable, the names of which your sisters knew; and over all the red tint of the sorrel that has made our youthful 'tummies' ache, and which we only knew as 'zour zabs.'

"Oh! the car drives you shall have—and grow fond of them, too, when, on the roughest and stoniest of roads, they will shake out of you the effects of the French chef's batter, and our 'Little Marys' will stay their progress chinwards, and we shall nimbly climb the mountainside to the 'One Man Pass,' and there we will sing to the hushed music of Atlantic waves Bridget McGinley's—

"'I've often seen far fairer hills
By many a foreign strand,
And there are greener, fairer hills
In our own dear, native land;
Yet I love them, oh! I love them,
And they hold my heart in thrall,
The heath-clad hills, the cloud-capped hills—
The hills of Donegal.'"

Photo by] *[W. K. Geen.*

"OH! THE CARS DRIVES YOU SHALL HAVE."



CHAPTER III.

THE OILY RIVER—A SUNDAY MORNING'S RAMBLE—A STORM—WORM FISHING.

BEFORE proceeding farther into Donegal we retraced our steps to fish from Hill's Hotel at Dunkineely. We found the river low on our arrival, and our sport was at first confined to the small brown trout and peeps at larger fish. On Sunday John McGlynn, our gillie, drove me and my son to see the Oily River. McGlynn and myself were on the bridge watching the running sea-trout jump the little fall. This so excited him that he exclaimed, "Shall I be driving back for the rods, sorr?" No doubt I should have replied, "Please, and be quick," had it not been for the love of rest from fishing on this day that has been fostered by the innumerable Sabbaths I have spent in Scotland. After six days of tramp, tramp, flog, flog, I enjoy a time off, and it enables me to be at it again on the morrow with renewed zest and vigour.

As the photo shows, abstaining from fishing does not mean keeping away from temptation. A river, or a brook, has attractions which will draw me a car-drive merely to roam on its banks. Who has

not felt the fascination of running water? A stream, to me, is a thing of life, full of familiar voices in all its moods. I have slept by it while it murmured sleepy music; waded in it when it was angry and felt its fret and fume grow with its swelling volume, until its curling eddies between my thighs have grown to gurglings round my waist; and when I have remained unmindful of these warnings, it has brought down sticks or ice to tap, tap at my back.

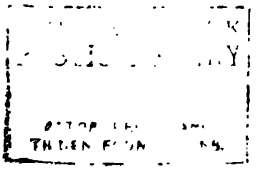
In summer-time, when it loiters idly on its way, I love to stalk its pools and see the big white lips of the open-mouthed chub as they rise to be near the falling insects. This I would sooner see than be present at a city banquet; and when I have stretched my neck and peeped deeper, I have seen sights more wonderful and pleasing than a Lord Mayor's procession. First, pretty shoals of roach came sailing by, the old and lazy bringing up the rear; then came a bream—the scout, no doubt. Yes, the shoal followed, demure, stately and solemn as the good sisters of Nazareth House. Next, a troop of minnows came gambolling in, as if just escaped from the restraint of a board school; these, finding themselves followed by half a score or more of their five-barred enemies, quickly disappeared. Then the feared enemy of all the others sidled out from amongst the muddy rushes to remain in sole possession.

From the bridge we have seen the leap of one of the gamest fish that swim, and the one above all

Photo by] [*W. K. Geen.*

BRIDGE NEAR DUNKINEELY.

"Shall I be driving back for the rods, sorr?"



others whose antics, when hooked, are most likely to regain for it the liberty it has lost. Not a moment wasted; now up, then down; now in, then out; with a veritable flutter of movement in the air which not infrequently gives it its deserved liberty.

Had we had with us our thirteen-feet rods, our light-tapered lines, some casts of fine round gut, and a few flies, I wonder what would have happened. We know that resolutions are weakened by the presence of temptation. The fish were there, everything looked promising, and, when white trout are in the humour, sport is exciting, fast, and glorious.

On McGlynn's return from stabling the horse I am off my perch, ready to commence the promised up-stream ramble on the Oily river bank. There is a deep pool at the first bend, which, we have been told, should be full of fish. To ensure a successful peep at them we must stalk stealthily, as if for a shot at big game. On hands and knees when near the show, if you desire to see everyday fish-life. As your nose and ears come through the fringe that frames the home, the ever-active little fish near the top attract you, and their ceaseless going to and fro, their fights and struggles for floating trifles, which the victor tastes and then spits out, keep you satisfied, until the stealthy, rising progress of a bigger fish frightens them and they scamper off. What sport the intruder will give if I have the luck to hook him with my grilse rod! How plainly its

shape, size and colourings were visible! And who could doubt what his intentions were towards his offspring? But the little ones were too nimble for daddy, and the, to some people, vexed question, "Do salmon feed in fresh water?" received no elucidation. A 12 lb. fish sinks back into the peaty, brown depths, and little salmon gather again, this time to be dispersed by the passing up of dashing sea-trout, each of which in its turn gives an extra flash of its side in recognition of the more rapid water that it encounters as it leaves the pool. Peep straight down. You will do it best by turning your face sideways and using one eye. There lies a big trout behind a sheltering rock, his wing-fins moving automatically in response to the flow of water; but now and then a fraction of the upper portion of a big tail will quiver as the owner of it irresolutely scans a passing something. I am patience itself on a Sunday; so, sooner or later, I see the tail make a movement that sends an open mouth within sucking-down distance of a fluttering fly.

For some considerable distance after this the river comes down over shallows and tumbles over rocks and stones, forming here and there miniature cascades which drop into pretty little pools, where brown trout have summer homes. At the corner, where the high banks are wooded, and where the rocks run out and confine the stream to a channel that might be stepped across, it is spouted down

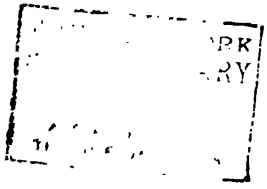


Photo by] [*W. K. Geen.*

OILY RIVER.

"I am taking peeps."

into a deepish pool, into which I am taking peeps, which show me how full the river is of life now the sea has sent its season's tribute, and, quite unmindful of our photographer, I am humming as coaxingly as I can :

"Oh, harmless tenant of the flood,
I do not wish to spill thy blood;
For Nature unto thee
Perchance has given a tender wife
And children dear to charm thy life,
As she has done to me."

The Oily is a perfect stream for a Sunday morning's ramble. It winds continuously, making deep, eddying pools at every turn. It hides between high banks, down which I scramble for yet another peep to where fish are lying secure from fright of fleeting shadows cast by passing birds. The sun is high, and hunger calls a halt, and we choose the bank of this shaded pool for a resting-place, so that while we sit and eat we can watch the running fish as they make the easy leap that lifts them yet another stage towards their bourne. By the time we had come to the tobacco course of our repast we were in a most benevolent frame of mind, and having no tackle, could have truly sung :

"Enjoy thy stream, oh, harmless fish!
And when an angler for his dish,
Through gluttony's vile sin,
Attempts, a wretch, to pull thee out,
God give thee strength, oh, gentle trout,
To pull the rascal in."

We saunter up and up, and on and on, listening to our intelligent gillie's history of every likely spot, and noting how, from where, and with what, to fish it on the morrow. What greater or purer joy does life hold than a day spent on the banks of a far-away, heather-hemmed mountain-stream, where breezes seem to blow for us alone? We travel up until the stream grows less and less.

Refreshed by breezes from mountain tops, we saunter on and up until every sense is filled with pure delight, and we become in fancy relative to the birds that fly, the fish that swim, and the hills that surround us. So greatly may this feeling possess you in such solitudes, especially on the seventh day, that you will long for something other than ignorant man to speak.

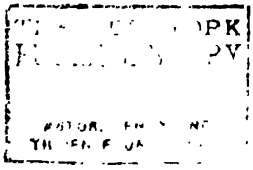
"All these and many more of His creation,
That made the heavens the angler oft doth see,
And takes therein no little delectation,
To think how strange and wonderful they be."

The sky was blue, and cloudless, as the photo shows, yet before the instrument that took it was boxed, a rumbling noise came down the mountain-side that told of clouds at sea, which almost suddenly came rolling in like vast volumes of hurried smoke, followed closely by vaster and denser clouds that darkened everything. Then the lightning streaked golden cracks in the sudden darkness, and the thunder followed, echoed and hung, re-echoed and hung again, amongst the hills, until louder peals

Photo by] [*W. K. Geen.*

OILY RIVER.

"The stream grows less and less."



came to make continuous clamour, and the storm commenced in earnest. Thunder succeeded thunder in terrific peals, whilst the roar of the gigantic echoes was everywhere. The lightning scourged the inky sky with an awful grandeur and magnificence that far exceeded anything I had ever seen before or ever wish to see again. The rain came down in torrents, and continued without abatement long after the sky had lightened and the thunder had been rolled away before the rising wind.

On the morrow we found that the steadily-flowing river of yesterday had broken bounds and gathered within its flow a miscellaneous variety of man's handiwork and Nature's fruits. Meadows had disappeared to form lakes, leaving only patches of green on which astonished cattle huddled. Tops of bushes shakingly withstood the torrent and helped to show the river's course. Animal life that had its joys on the river bank was all disturbed, just in its most joyful season. Even the moorhen, that surely should have known better, had built her nest of sedges too low down. Fortunately, she had not forgotten to make it buoyant, so it lifted when the rising water reached it, and she was now guiding it with her beak to a place of safety amongst the bushes that helped to make the sheltering eddy. The brood, between their crack-voice notes, stretched their necks and wondered why nothing came to their open mouths. From somewhere farther down a tiny voice responded, telling that one had fallen

overboard, which, no doubt, the male bird was busily looking after.

The flood upset many well-laid plans, ours amongst the number, but that was of little moment: we had only to turn our thoughts from flies to worms; worms, and moss to scour them.

Please, kind reader, do not turn away, but accept the assurance that, even should you never have been guilty of such poaching practices as worm fishing is said to be, by some too goody-goody anglers, there is yet time for you to learn and much enjoy this sport. You may hold up your hands in horror and refuse to hear a word upon this subject: if that be the case, then skip the rest of this chapter. But if you can imagine that the occasion may sometimes demand such methods of fishing, against all dictates of rigid sentiment, then I will help you.

Who is not ignorant of the curious ideas that rule some of the fly-fisher's world? They are so curious as not to be readily understood—as, indeed, were those of the angler who grew so delicately refined that a hooked fish became too gross for him and he had to hand it to his gillie to be played and killed.

We can only wonder and pass on, feeling thankful that our more elastic conscience allows us to put "only rarely" instead of "never."

Be advised. Always have with you a coarse linen bag, the size and shape you carry your sponge in. That's the preliminary step, I do, and am off,

on the particular morning of which I write, to fill it. Close by I gathered the moss, and in the kitchen garden of the hotel I got red worms (a small worm with a knot in the centre) and red heads (a small dew-worm) from an old cucumber bed; and from some old and moist manure near the cowsheds, a few gilt-tails or brandlings, which is a small worm with alternate rings of red and yellow. That these treasures might scour and brighten quickly I poured a tablespoon of milk over them, and then I stood possessed of all that was needed for any fish that swims in discoloured waters in one little bag, with a big mouth, out of which I could with ease take the worm I most desired.

> "You must not every worm promiscuous use,
> Judgment will tell the proper baits to choose."

During the day the river gathered back within its bounds, and by the next morning was just perfection for the art we meditated. I started with expectations of enjoyment as keen as if it were early spring and Tay salmon the quarry.

In the eddying pools we used a little float with two twists of fine lead wire to cock it—better than split shot, as it can be easily removed—a foot or more above the hook; and as it was sea-trout or salmon we hoped for most, we had a No. 7 hook baited with a medium-sized red-head or two brandlings.

Here and there we got a fish, sometimes two,

and as we took alternate pools and stayed but little anywhere, by lunch time we had wandered up to the third bridge and had decided to turn and fish back, adopting the different methods that the falling and clearing water suggested. The leads and floats were removed and smaller hooks put on, baited with the toughest and brightest red worms, and we walked down a bit, waded in and fished up stream. We cast our baits above each likely spot, and when mine came to the little basin of smooth water, there was a pluck, pluck at the line; then, dropping the point of the rod to give a second of time so that more than the tail might be in the fish's mouth, I gave a short, sharp strike and the fish was ours.

Then we were out and down other lengths, to fish up again. Under every bank and behind every stone we let the worm flow freely, with the result that out of the most unlikely spots, even close to our feet, the fish took the worm. Sometimes we were too quick in our responses, at others too slow; but much practice at our "poaching" has made us clever, so we can afford to return large numbers, keeping only a few for to-morrow's breakfast, the white trout being reserved for dinner. And so another happy day in Donegal flew by.

CHAPTER IV.

KILLYBEGS FAIR—THE ENNISKILLEN SHOPKEEPER—THE RETIRED COLONEL.

IT was fair day at Killybegs, and the train that took us there for the second time was so crowded that we had to get in just where we could. Men with loud, emphatic voices were laying down the law on a variety of agricultural topics, but they were not so pre-occupied as to forget to squeeze themselves together to make a seat for me, very considerately, next the door I entered at.

Above the general talk, or because of his nearness to me, I heard my immediate neighbour address the person opposite with:

"It's seven pounds ten you're owing me, Maloney, and it's glad of payment I'll be."

Mr. Maloney's reply was a full acknowledgment of his indebtedness, and by its tone one might have inferred that such public reference to it was rather pleasing to him.

"It's every one of meself that knows I am owing you sivin pounds tin, Mr. McCarty, and it's plenty of shecurity I am holding."

"Security is it you are holding? Faix, I think

it's meself should hold that; unless, may-be, you have some intentions of paying me this same day."

"Begorra, and that's thrue for you, Mr. McCarty. I had intintions, and it's hours I spent wid me wife this morning, and all I got for that same is a shillin' beyant me fare."

"Then I'd better be having the security, Maloney; it's the square way of doing business."

"Faix, no! I think ye'd better take me shillin'; you can no be wanting me wife and childer for sivin pounds tin. There's no belavin' Mrs. McCarty wud be agreeable, more power to her, wid so many fine childer of her own."

A car was waiting at the station to take us on to Carrick. Killybegs is a remarkably clean town, prettily wooded in its environs and beautifully situated on the north side of its charming harbour, which is nearly landlocked, and secure in all weathers. Here you can rely on the best and freshest fish food; indeed, it is quite an important fishing station. The town and its districts have a great reputation as a health resort, and deservedly so, too, if the benefits I once gained from a fortnight's sojourn there may be taken as a criterion. Sea-anglers may enjoy sport to their hearts' content, as all kinds of fish are abundant, and the pollack grounds over which they can twiddle their rubber worms are practically unlimited. I had splendid sport round the islands at the mouth of the harbour during my first visit there; but as that is many

years since, I think it better to give you the more recent experiences of the writer of the following letter :—

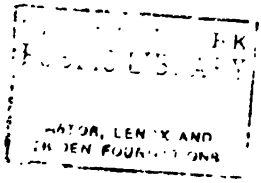
"TEELIN NATIONAL SCHOOLS, CARRICK,
"*October* 19, 1903.

"DEAR MR. GEEN,—I really must write to tell you of the wonderful sport I had here after you left. The sunken rocks and headlands must have been swarming with big ones; but no matter how many or how large they were that I brought to the pier, the fishermen and coastguardsmen would be sure to say you and your son had taken ten times as many, and larger ones. During the school holidays I visited Killybegs, where I had great hauls, some specimens weighing over 14lb. Thank you again and again for the wire and leads. Come again to Ireland, and do not forget how pleased I shall be for you or any of your English friends to use my boat.—Faithfully yours,

"J. BOYLE."

Killybegs' main street was not easily negotiated as we sought to leave the town for Carrick. The din and gesticulations of the excited crowds offering their wares and animals for sale, with the jaunting-cars everywhere and in every possible position, some with their long shafts pointed heavenwards, as if in appeal against the rough usage being dealt out to them by other cars horsed by ill-tempered or frightened animals, made up a Bedlam of disorder, while the drivers, madder than the brutes they drove, made confusion worse confounded.

It was a relief to leave the quaint and interesting, but noisy, sights which, judging from the numbers and variety we met going fairwards, would grow more quaint and interesting towards evening. Bustling lads in coveys of a dozen or more, toying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At this the old lady looked so proud and happy in her husband that I would have kissed her myself had there not been a whip that might come about my ears before I could have effected my purpose. Surely the wife had read my fleeting thoughts, for she beckoned me to draw near. When I did so, she pressed into my hand, holding it fast, a small cake, while she said in solemn tones:

> "Ate just the small half, the larger save
> To give to the colleen whose love ye crave."

As I held the cake in my hand and thought of its powers, I started an interesting calculation. I thought of the basketfuls I had seen which the donkey was slowly drawing to impatiently waiting "bhoys" ("bhoys" are of all ages); and of the pretty "colleens" shyly hoping; and then I tried to find a resulting product. What a problem for the brain-racking column of the *Globe!*

Perhaps my photographer feared that some spell was beginning its work upon me, for he woke me from my thoughts by hastily relieving me of the cake which had so peculiarly comè into my possession. Faith in love-philtres and love-cakes is very general, and it is more than probable that what I could chronicle about the great wonder effected by this particular cake would be very interesting to many who are prepared to welcome further proof of their marvellous efficacy. But these I must disappoint, for that is another person's story.

When we had parted with the interesting old couple all thoughts of the fair were ousted by the magnificent views of the country and ocean that surrounded the spot on which we stood. Below us lay Fintragh Bay, with its flesh-coloured strand; and away in the very far distance the Sligo coast, having for its background the dark blue outline of Ben Bulbin. Here there is unbounded delight for the eyes, while mouth and nostrils are filled with breezes fresh from Atlantic waves, and over all, a most delightful sense of space and freedom.

As some of my readers may not as yet have visited Ireland, they may be anxious as to the reception that would be accorded them in the wild highlands. I assure them they may be easy on that score. They will not be long in discovering that their presence is felt by one and all to be a compliment to the town and to the district in which they are staying, and that each and every individual feels a proprietary right in them as his guests, notwithstanding the proud position assumed by their particular host, whosoever he may be. Your person and property will be absolutely secure; no man will injure either; neither will he allow annoyance to approach you. Woe to the luckless spalpeen that shall disgrace them by begging of you!

"Sir Knight! I feel not the least alarm,
No son of Erin will offer me harm:
For, though they love women and golden store,
Sir Knight! they love honour and virtue more."

There are men and women who have the attributes of the lodestone in drawing to them, quite unknown to themselves, the confidence of their fellow creatures. Sympathy is writ large in every feature, and their tongues must perforce give voice to the charity that is ever welling up within them. Some of us become children in their presence, and, childlike, we rely more on our instincts than on our judgment. The Irish are susceptibility itself to sympathy, and their innermost thoughts may be yours; but let them once doubt you, and a snail is not more ready to draw back than they. And if their doubt be justified by your badly-disguised ridicule of them or of their country, you may, in a flash, find yourself consigned to the hottest corner in realms unmentionable.

I once had the misfortune to lay myself open to the suspicion of attempting to ridicule an Enniskillen shopkeeper. I was staying there for a few days' fishing in that neighbourhood, and, as I was leaving for an outlandish part, I thought it well to take with me a bottle of the best whiskey I could get. So, on the evening prior to starting, I entered a store and asked for it, and the reply I got was:

"What size bottle?" This, on consideration, seems a simple question, yet I was for a moment so nonplussed that I replied:

"It's just a bottle I want." Then, said he:

"The divil take ye, if you're not knowing the

size of it." Even then I could only think that a bottle of whiskey was just a bottle of whiskey, and so I told him that where I came from we know nothing of different sized bottles of it.

By this time he had lost all patience, and told me that I should be where I came from and never leave it again on any account. I rejoined that I thought him a red-headed little spitfire. This drew from him a flow of curses that I thought would never cease. Their easy flow and infinite variety were such that I remained to hear and see him work himself to the highest pinnacle of his blue art. The gradation from his mildest shot at me to his stronger and hotter ones, as his passion grew, showed a skilled excellence in shading that fascinated me and took from me all power of speech, and so I listened to the ever-increasing stream as it flowed from his wonderfully stored memory. On my return to the hotel, I did what I then wished I had done before, purchased my whiskey there.

Just on the point of starting next morning, it occurred to me to buy tobacco, so I hastened into the nearest shop where I saw packets of it in the window, and there, to my astonishment, I came face to face with Mr. Eloquent of the night before. I was about to rush out; but his smile at my open mouth altered my mind, and I asked him if he kept 4-oz. tins of medium Capstan. He said he did when he could not sell them, and that it would be

a pleasure to serve a gentleman who knew what he wanted.

Do not expect Irishmen to be in a hurry about trifles. It is only when merriment or profit is in the air that they really bustle themselves. They have infinitely too much faith in to-morrow for over-haste to-day. Their philosophy is portrayed in these song extracts:

"Sit ye down, my heartie, and gi'e us a crack,
Let the wind tak' the care o' the world on his back."

And:

"I like to lay down in the sun,
And drame, when my faytures is scorchin',
Then when I'm too ould for more fun,
Why I'll marry a wife with a fortune."

They worry not, but leave much to Fate; and the hopes that leave some with their youth stay on with them all through life. Had I the ordering that doctors have, whose speciality is brain and nerve troubles, it is to such an atmosphere as is produced by the scenery and the people of Donegal that I would send them. There, where every stone has its legend, every hill its tale, where Atlantic breezes rustle wild flowers and bring gushes of perfume, they may see what pleasures life still holds for them.

I cannot remember how many retired colonels I have met on my angling trips; possibly not nearly so many as I imagine. A colonel may be so much

in evidence as to leave impressions that multiply him. It is a little startling when, on your arrival at a hotel, you see him in the porch and the first words you hear from him are:

"Good morning? Good morning for what?" in a distinctly irritable tone; and then, in answer to his gillie's further statement:

"It's a fine morning for fish, colonel."

"Fine morning for fish be ——. There are no fish." The gillie evidently knew his man, so in a coaxing tone he said:

"Be jabers, sorr, it was a rale beauty you so nearly had yesterday. Bad luck to the beastly bush he was round in a twinkling second!"

The colonel, a little mollified, said:

"A kelt, man; a kelt."

When taking his seat for dinner after a fruitless day—fishless, I prefer to say, as no day's fishing can be altogether fruitless—he snatched at the menu in such a fashion as made me fear that what might be written there would not be pleasing to him. He read aloud:

"Potato Soup.
Rabbit Pie."

Then compressed his lips, puckered his brow, and read again, quite witheringly:

"Potato Soup.
Rabbit Pie."

What he then said does not count. I know he

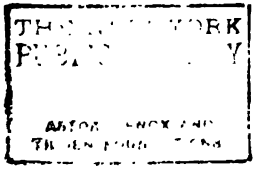
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Photo by] [*W. K. Green*

ONLY A CABIN."

has served his country in beastly climates while I have stayed at home.

"Think what 'e's been,
Think what 'e's seen,
Think of his pension an'—
Gawd save the Queen."

A month later I had the good fortune to meet the gallant soldier again, and, strange coincidence, he was talking to a gillie; but in such a different tone that there was no need for him to tell me he had enjoyed his stay in co. Donegal.

The drive from Killybegs to Carrick, ten miles, continues so interesting that you are full of expectations at each turn of the road as to the scenes that will present themselves. Though it be only a cabin, the infinite variety of these dwellings, which seem so much alike, clearly denotes to those who have been observant in such matters the circumstances of the dwellers therein.

A long, steep descent takes us to the village of Kilcar, where fishing is promised by the presence of the Abbey ruins. Only one more hill to climb, and we have a view of Carrick, which stands a little above Teelin Bay and has the Glen river running at its side, and the Owenwee river close at hand.

CHAPTER V.

CARRICK—POLLACK FISHING AND POLLACK TACKLE.

IT is of Carrick that I shall have much to say, of both river and sea fishing, as it was there I had great fun and pleasure from both pursuits. You will be pleased with the Glencolumbkille Hotel, its genial host and painstaking hostess, with the large and pleasant reception rooms, and the abundant provision for the Donegal appetite, which it is expected will always be with you.

The town lies at the base of Slieve League, and immediately beyond the topmost point there is an almost upright fall into the Atlantic. The mountain must be climbed to the One Man's Pass, where the huge cliffs that fringe this coast may be seen in all their grandeur, and where mighty waves come thundering in against the highest sea cliff I have ever seen. The Pass is a narrow ridge with a steep slope seawards. It is safe enough for any one sure-footed, but the nervous should retreat long before they feel the swimming in the head that comes on many at such heights.

The hotel is at times much frequented by anglers, as, in addition to the Glen and Owenwee rivers,

there are numerous lakes, and, after or before, as the weather may suit, the best possible sea fishing. The host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Walker, gave us a kindly welcome and a substantial lunch, which were all the more acceptable as this was to be our home for a week or more. Indeed, I recall with pleasure how glad I felt to find Carrick quite up to the expectations I had formed of it from the reports of friends.

We found the rivers too low for fishing, but there remained a choice between a number of lakes, over which visitors to the hotel could fish, and the sea. Billy, the man introduced to us by our host as an excellent gillie, advised our trying the latter.

I have never been able to be stand-offish with gillies, as some are who believe this necessary for the keeping of them in their proper place. This may be partly due to my having been so many weeks together for so many, many years with McLeish, who needed no such treatment. I have nearly always been lucky in my gillies, and I was particularly so at Carrick. When I am to be with a man for many days I begin by taking him entirely into my confidence. I tell him what I most wish for and the extent of my knowledge as to the best methods of realising my wish, and I show him my gear and lures. Then I add what I always feel: "Well, Billy, lucky or unlucky, I hope we shall learn something of each other, and be very comfortable together."

It was only when the wind came on to blow and the waves to roll a bit that I realised how self-sacrificing Billy had been in voting for what was so likely to be troublesome to him. This, and the game way in which he fought against his troubles until he was floored, and his "Shure, I'll not be lavin' the boat; it's meself that will be a sailor when impty," quite won me, and we were fast friends thereafter.

The pleasures of angling are enhanced by the use of a rod and line of only just sufficient strength for the particular person using it to have the chances in his favour of a successful issue to an encounter with the fish he seeks to capture. This is more frequently lost sight of in sea angling than in any other, and is pardonable, seeing how new the sport is and how uniform the exclamations of the professional salts are when they get a sight of a slim rod and fine tackle. When they first see my little rod, fine blue line, and almost invisible wire trace, they always prophesy, "That gear'll get carried away, sir; you'd better let I put out the hand-lines." I hope, therefore, you will not think it amiss if I offer a description of my pollack outfit, which is, to me, the up-to-date result of my nearly fifty years' experience.

To assist my readers to understand the more readily, my son has given a photo of our two rods and tackle.

Rods.—The rods are 6 ft. 6 in. lengths of bamboo

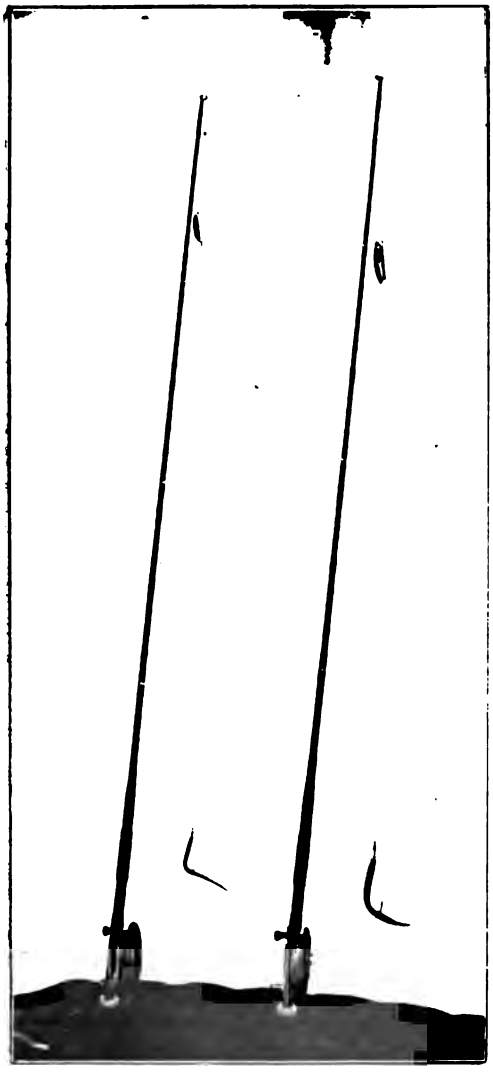
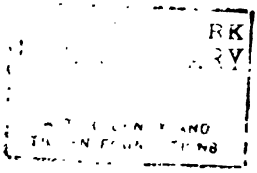


Photo by [*W. K. Geen.*

OUR TWO RODS AND TACKLE.



that will bend very considerably before there is any danger of a break. The tops are a trifle stouter than for a spinning rod, and from that the size of the 6 ft. 6 in. cane can be guessed. They weigh 14 oz. each. They are fitted with three porcelain rings, of which the top one is $\frac{5}{8}$ in. in diameter, outer measurement, and the two lower $\frac{3}{8}$ in. The material for the rings had been quite a distressing question to me for as long as I can remember, until Mr. Harris solved the problem by making them of porcelain and sending me a set to try. The rods were made to my order and to my satisfaction by Mr. Ogden Smith, of Twickenham.

Winch.—Diameter, 5 in.; depth, $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. Let it be of best quality, of wood freely running on good metal foundations. Keep all metal and woodwork well oiled.

Lines.—What is the best material for lines? This has been an oft-fought battle. We have seen as champions tanned hemp, dyed flax, twisted cotton, plaited linen. Then, with loud pronouncement, came the wire lines, drawn out from all kinds of tough metals. They had a short and merry day, kinked and exit-ed. I still recommend plaited silk. Dye it a dark blue—Maypole soap does it effectually and without injury—and so fill it with mutton fat that there can be no room in it for rotting sea-salts. Also mark off, with pieces of white silk sewn in, the two distances, 15 yards and 30 yards.

Leads.—To the line is attached a Geen's lead that has a swivel at each end. They are made in all sizes, from ¼ oz. to 4 oz. The two showing are 1 oz. and 4 oz.

Trace.—The trace is of annealed wire, 5 ft. in length, with sufficient spring to keep it straight, and yet so pliable that it can be twisted four times round when forming the loops that fasten it to the lead and lure. This wire is blackened when made, and is so fine that it is less visible than the finest gut.

Worms.—Rubber worms are undoubtedly by far the best all-round bait. The red rubber is more generally preferred, but, towards evening and on dark days, I have found white more killing, while on very bright days black will sometimes call them when others fail. The photo shows the extremes in sizes that I use. Even the smaller is larger than is used, or, rather, I should say, was used in many places where I have visited. It measures 1 in. in circumference and 6¾ in. in length. The dimensions of the larger one are 1½ in. by 8¾ in.

The salmon netting season was in full swing, and it was no rare occurrence for a hundred to be taken in one haul of the net in the bay by the owner's (Sir James Musgrave's) men, while at the same time independent boats were reaping a rich harvest beyond in the open sea. This great rush of business made sea-going boats scarce, and I was therefore grateful to the schoolmaster, Mr. J. Boyle,

who freely offered me the use of his. It is quite three miles to the pier-head from which it was arranged to start, so we determined on the use of a car, one of many at the hotel. We were very pleased with this ride, as it enabled us the better to enjoy a sight of the beautiful bay, the scenery surrounding it, and the fishers thereon.

The first photo shows a portion of the bay looking towards Carrick. The second is the lower end as it enters the sea. The well-constructed and useful pier was erected by the Congested Districts Board, a body of men who deserve lasting credit, even if their good works were limited to the piers from which I have started and the boats I have fished from.

It was about eleven o'clock when we started in the boat to try our luck, and very soon my son was prepared to drop the bait overboard; but Billy's and Paddy's curiosity, which had been growing with the putting together of the rod and tackle, caused them to cease rowing and Paddy to ask, "Faix, it's not Irish pollack you'll be after with a thread that it's meself can't see?" His doubts varied only in his manner of expressing them from what I had so often heard before, so that I was ready to say, "Row on; we shall soon see."

As my son was letting out the line I looked over the side that I might tell him of the depth at which to fish. I had only time to see the great

weeds that grew everywhere in sight before a tussle commenced, which the boatmen felt fully convinced, so we gathered later on, would end in loss of much "consate and gear." Kirk had guessed all this, and was at times dangerously over-careful, and the battle appeared the longest I ever knew with a pollack. I had time to think of the poet Gay's ines:—

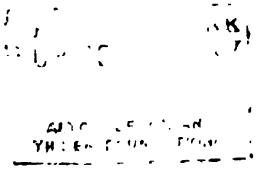
> "And now again, impatient of the wound,
> He rolls and writhes his straining body round;
> Then headlong shoots beneath the dashing tide,
> The trembling fins the boiling wave divide.
> Now hope exalts the fisher's beating heart,
> Now he turns pale and fears his dubious art;
> He views the trembling fish with longing eyes,
> While the line stretches with th' unwieldy prize."

At last I got him on the gaff, and then our boatmen knew that a 12 lb. fish had failed to cause a break. Their eyes were widely open and their hats tilted by fingers that scratched their scalps, which is their method of giving expression to wonderment beyond their power of speech. Another, and another, and yet another, was hooked, played, and gaffed before my rod was ready, and when I did commence it was by no means a rare occurrence for us both to be simultaneously doing our best to thwart the desperate dives of frantic fish to regain their home amongst the deep-down, weedy rocks.

It is really with us now as it was in our youth: we most require what is most in season, be it

Photo by] [*W. K. Gee.*

LOOKING TOWARDS CARRICK, TEELIN BAY.



marbles, tops, or buttons. Even in Moses' time first-fruits were at a premium. We long for the fifteenth of January and our first salmon, the first of April for trout, the twelfth of August for grouse, and the sport of every other season on its birthday. Soon it will be known by all sportsmen (the knowledge grows apace) that there is a sport as glorious in its season as any of these.

Salmon fishing is costly, trout fishing precarious, and grouse shooting not infrequently a sight of birds deliberately made wild and a free hand with rabbits. Pollack fishing is cheap, and the fish unsophisticated. They are absolutely on the wait for your lure, and will let you know it without a moment's hesitation. Their appetites scarcely ever fail, and, no matter how full they may be, they make noble efforts for just one more. They are so jealously hungry when another gets the bait before them that they will follow the hooked one to within a yard of the gaff, and when you commence to let out again for another try, your bait will sometimes be seized with such violence as will teach you to keep your fingers clear of the handle of your winch.

It was soon mid-day, and the sky everywhere a a perfect blue, with the sun at its highest, blazing down with great effect on our necks and noses, and yet the fish bit as if it were early dawn or the time that comes between the setting of the sun and dark night. No skill was used, such as is sometimes

needed, of exactitude in speed or the angle at which to approach a blind rock so that the fish should have the best chance. Neither had we, as is usual, to turn back over a spot whence we had taken a good fish, knowing that, there, others were likely to be as willing as the too lucky one at our first offering. A heavy hang on the line, a strong, holding pull as good judgment permitted, a game fight, the gaff, and so on and on, without intermission, until lunch time.

The absolute calm that prevailed enabled us to land in a fracture of the mighty wall that bounds in the ocean here. What glorious appetites we had after such a morning's sport in such a place! We were made thirsty, too, by the sniff and taste of Atlantic salt. The opening of the luncheon basket, forgotten until now, was a matter of moment, and I watched the operation until nearly all was emptied out before my great thirst caused me to cry out as I mopped my brow, "Surely we have the claret with us!" We had.

Our stay, only just sufficient, was cut short by the rising tide, and we were soon afloat again and as busy as before. Now and then a heavy fish would, in spite of the greatest strain possible, succeed in regaining his weedy haunts, and we had to back the boat over and beyond the spot to which the line pointed, so as to be drawing him out the way he entered. These variations, not altogether unpleasant, made the only breaks

Photo by] [*W. K. Green.*

THE LOWER END OF TEELIN BAY.

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in our triumphant progress. No mishaps, no breakings, until the boat was too full of fish for cleanly comfort, and we had to return to Teelin Pier. A small crowd had gathered at the landing-place in consequence of reports spread by the watchful coastguards that "the strangers who were fishing with rods" were returning with a boat nearly full of fish.

Pollack do not stand low in the scale of edible fish. It is, to my mind, infinitely to be preferred to the indigestible cod, and if you will, during your day's fishing, select as many as may be needed for the hotel from amongst the four to six-pounders (the heavier are rather coarser eating), and have them gutted as soon as caught, and, when well cleaned, tied by the tail to the side of the boat and allowed to drip dry, you will not only be pleased with the result, but you will probably be the recipient of congratulations from the other guests.

Pollack thus cleaned won for me the affection of an Irish maid named Bridget. She showed her affection in innumerable little ways, that added much to my comfort during my long stay, and much to my respect for her. Later on, in proper place, I will introduce you to Bridget, when you, too, must perforce admire her excellent qualities which, I have reason to believe, are somewhat due to the help of the excellent training that she received while with Mrs. Walker, our present

hostess. In the meantime, be advised; have your fish cleaned in the boat as near the time of capture as possible. It will improve the fish, tend to smooth your path, and often be a great help to the hard-worked cook or kitchen-maid.

CHAPTER VI.

A GRAND DAY AMONGST THE POLLACK—BAD BEGINNINGS—"THE DIVILS AND THE GEAR"—PADDY AND BILLY.

THOSE of my readers who have never made an early start for a day on the sea, with hopes higher than the waves and with the thrushes' and blackbirds' joyful hailing of the morn filling their ears, have a joy to taste, of which they should take careful note. Before the lark had finished his matins the boat had been manned, and we were paying out our lines in a sea which resembled a gently-heaving mass of molten metal, that had a silver fringe which encircled the feet of rocks, the heads of which were as yet hidden in morning mists. The ring of gold on the horizon changed to streaks of red and gold that lit up the headlands far and near, and partially cleared away the shroud which hid their vast proportions.

Then, while thoughts were busy with Nature's changes, there came a discordant noise, which told that the hitherto regular flow of an extended line had met a check, and with such violence as told of vigorous, tugging life. Until now I had been in Wonderland. The soft breeze that moved the sea

and the warm splendour blazing in the east gave the water a lovely glory of pink and azure, shading first to a lighter blue, and in the farther distance to a glittering silver brightness, which was so dazzling that the eyes had to seek elsewhere for rest, We had but the faintest thought of fish, and their sudden coming with such rude hand-shakes was quite a shock to two wee spectators at one of Nature's early morning transformation scenes.

Everything seemed unreal and dreamlike, yet so unlimitedly great as to make dreams mere peep-shows and dreamers petty atoms. All this and more I saw while the rod lay on my knees, and I was toying with the winch, unmindful of its check. The dumb winch protested against such unwarrantable neglect by paring a nail with its handle so closely that my finger bled; but the fight was on, and all my thoughts were needed to overcome the difficulties of a line, the loosened rings of which were tangled.

Three several times the fish turned in time to save the break, but the fourth wild rush was too long drawn-out, and the expected and richly-deserved loss occurred. The bait, trace, lead, and forty yards of line disappeared, leaving me a tangled mass of line and a much vexed temper to straighten out, while my companion fished on with the steady nerve of the shooter whose first shot has been successful.

What omens first shots often are! Nell, my

spaniel, when shooting with me, made the game break cover on my side, and when the single-barrel, muzzle-loading gun was fired she would come through the hedge to gather the spoil. She would not readily believe I had missed, and when it became manifest to her that I had, she walked close to heel, a sorrowing creature, and we both knew that this was not to be one of our most successful days. Is it not wise when we make a bad start to pause awhile, readjust our feelings, and try to make a sort of fresh beginning?

Had I only practised what I preach, I might not have so completely wrecked a day I fished at St. Ives. I had promised to proceed by an early train to St. Ives to fish with a friend who had gone down over-night. I was at King's Cross much too soon, and waited patiently for the train to come in or be made up at the usual platform. As the clock came to the starting-time I ventured to ask why it did not appear, and learned that it was starting from a suburban traffic platform that morning. Off I rushed, and got there in time—to see it just at the end of its platform well started. I had to wait for an hour for the next train, which would take me on to Peterborough, whence I must train back to St. Ives.

As I passed the river at St. Ives, on the journey down, I looked towards the spot where my friend had said I should find him fishing. I waved my handkerchief to him, and he responded. I soon got

a train back from Peterborough, which, I was told, would stop at my station. But again I was at fault. As I afterwards discovered, I should have advised the guard of my wish to alight, and, as I had not done so, we proceeded Londonwards, my only satisfaction being another wave of saluting handkerchiefs. Again I got to Peterborough, and again to St. Ives. By this time I was not so cool or collected as a fisherman with his impedimenta should be, and as the train seemed a long time in stopping, doubts came to me as to its intentions, and I sprang out, with my rods in one hand and my bag in the other. Somehow the hanging bag got between my legs, and I should most certainly have had a very nasty fall had I not broken my momentum by coming into violent collision with the station-master, who was knocked against the palings, while I sprawled my full length along the platform. Of course he was very wroth, and took my name and address, but on hearing my explanations he smiled, scanned my features closely, looked pityingly, and said it was truly a strangely-peopled world.

It was long past noon when I commenced to fish, but I got two nice jack, the first of which I put in the dry ditch on the other side of the towpath. When I had spun out the second it was time to think of a wash, a cup of tea, and a train for home. To my surprise, I was unable to find my first fish; the dry ditch was everywhere alike and equally full

of dead leaves; so I got to the inn with only one in my bag. My friend and I were directed to a wash-house at the rear for our clean, and, while I was busy rubbing my face with my soapy hands, I heard a boy's voice cry, "Mother, mother! the old sow is running away with the gentleman's bag." I was soon at the front and in full chase of the thief, which was lightening her load by occasional droppings—first a winch, then a case of spinners, and then my box of sinkers, but never loosening her hold of the fish. A stern race always seems a long one, and a race after a pig while your eyes are smarting with good, old-fashioned, strong-smelling brown Windsor soap is a fit punishment for a man who begins his day as I did.

Who that has the love of sport in him has not been moved by his belief in the wonderful resources of the inexhaustible sea? Who knows what his next tussle may be with? It may be that by my carelessness of the morning I had lost a sea bass, a fish whose ferocious energy may be compared to the wild salmon, to whom the pain of the hook is a reminder of the seal-made gash, and who fights again as he has fought before. The careful angler set all doubts at rest respecting *his* fish by successfully bringing to boat a splendid pollack; but the careless, fascinated dreamer had only his bleeding finger, tangled line, and wonderment about the fish that had played such havoc.

The splendour of the morning was followed by

a glorious day, the heat of which was moderated by soft in-shore breezes. We had reasons for welcoming the cooling breeze: our necks were smarting from the effects of yesterday's scorching sun, and our noses were peeling, sore and red. During leisure moments the itchings of these protrusions, beyond the shade of headgear, received attentions from briny fingers, after which they glowed and itched the more.

With tumbled temper, tickling nose, bleeding finger, and a tangled line, I fortunately bethought me of Shakespeare's words, "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" and of my morning pipe, and I set myself more firmly on my seat, determined to smooth my temper first, after which no doubt the other ills would grow less and less. The shepherd's first smoke on mountain top could be no sweeter than mine soon grew to be.

Kirk is not the least observant of my block of sons, but he is quite the most silent. I had uttered no word that could have betrayed my inward perturbation beyond the above quotation, but he knew, and I was allowed to smoke in silence, excepting only when he had a fish on, which, judging by its weighty rush, might be the monster of his dreams, and then only, "I've got him this time, dad." The broken finger-nail was lost to thought in wreaths of smoke that soothed the nose's irritation, and the line-clogged wheel seemed easily put right, and by the time—all too quickly—the squirt-like spluttering

of the exhausted pipe said "finis," I was as I ought to have been when first we started, and then there would have been no mishap.

I was ready at Dundawoona Point, where Paddy's "Divil you'll hould thim here if they're in their usual timper," was either meant for encouragement to begin or a sly knock. Billy, noticing a look of inquiry on my face, felt called upon to support his mate by offering his opinion, "It'll be a great bargain entirely between the divils and the gear."

Now Kirk is roused again, and there comes from between shut teeth, "The divil's on, Billy, and the baker has him." There was a great tussle, in stern earnest at first, but, when the fish was mastered, there was some feigning, just to balance matters. Up to now I had no fish, and yet there were at least a dozen flopping in the boat. Paddy would not adopt the suggestion of turning back to try the point again. "It's the living merwoman that ye'll be getting hould of. It's thrue for yer she's been seen sitting combing her long black hair, and it's meself that's heard her sing on many a wild night."

There is no living creature so likely to take you in as an Irishman. He is brimming over with blarney; but his wildest stories when they are flavoured, be it ever so mildly, with superstition are gospel truth to him. For him there *are* merwomen, and they have favourite stones on which they do

their toilet, and from which they give out songs that blend with the music of wild waves.

Paddy and Billy, too, were thirsty. The first-named announced the fact by spitting on his hands, looking at the result, and then saying, "Be jabers, it's silver pieces I'm for wasting on these bits of timber." Paddy, as may be seen by his photo, is a very short man; yet his was the longest drink I ever saw. He was only in the middle of it when Billy, unable to control himself, exclaimed, "Arrah, be aisy, Paddy; it's meself that's on fire within and without!" We all had a drink, and, could you have seen my nose, you would probably have thought, "Yes, and many of them."

At last, just as I am looking up to Seagull Spink rock, made interesting and beautiful by thousands of birds perched on their various niches, and by other thousands that make an ever-moving curtain by their incessant curving, fluttering flights, I have a nibble which comes to naught. This seldom happens; there is an attractiveness in rubber which almost invariably gives the fish a longing for other bites until he is hooked. The tail of the worm beyond the hook is long, and lends itself to nibbles.

Rubber baits remind me that, while fishing at Ramsgate one November with fisherman James Groombridge, I caught a cod which weighed in the market scales 18 lb., and which I determined to have cleaned, packed, and sent off at once. Groom-

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Photo by] [*W. K. Green.*

"A PLEASING PICTURE OF CERTAIN SPORT."

bridge cut it open in my presence, and took from it a rubber football such as children kick on esplanades. The ball was slit, but it was all there.

From Seagull Spink there is a continuous rocky, weedy bottom, at a depth sufficient to hold the largest fish, for about four miles to Muckross Head, where pollack are as thick as priests in Rome at Christmas time. The soft breeze had freshened slightly, and the wavy ripple washed the rocks with a pleasing hissing sound.

It would be a pleasing picture of certain sport could Kirk but stand and point his camera with steady aim. He did his best while I gripped him from behind by his neck and seat as policemen do the prisoners they run in. The rocky promontory called Muckross Point is of horizontally-laid stones, that form steps upwards into the clear sky and downwards into the blue sea. They spread out from the topmost step, bow-shaped, in an ever-increasing length so far as the eye can peer; but of the bottom steps from which the pollack came there can be no account, other than that the fish from off them were boisterously hungry and in such numbers as told of weedy carpets on them. So hungry were they that they came from great depths, took our baits, and then dived straight down. It was the length of line they took in their return that enabled us to measure the depth from which they came.

Kirk is quite an adept in discovering the height

to which they will rise. His method is to let out gently a few yards and then recover a little of it, to show the fish that the rubber worm is frightened and fleeing from them. Then another few yards and a similar recovery, and so on and on, until the temptation is too great and the fish comes up at it. He often got his fish much closer to the boat than I did, and consequently had a better chance of keeping it from the bottom, and could bring it quicker to the gaff. Kirk's success was always pleasing to our boatman, Pat. At times my methods succeeded best, and then Billy would look at me with pride, while Pat seemed as if on the point of losing something—bets, perhaps. If Billy could only guess how I have striven to teach all I know of games and sports to all my boys, and how they have bettered their poor instructor's teachings, he would put his money on the other horse.

The photos of our catches are mostly failures; but we only discovered this on our return to England. Now we know that fish must hang down, or stand up, with the fisher by their side, with a statement of his height to give guidance for judgment. In this photo the oars have lost their blades and the fish their size; it is only Paddy that is real. He sits true in every detail, even to the warp and weft of his tweed shirt; but, alas! the camera seems to have exhausted itself with this effort, and everything else is a mere parody of the actual thing.

Photo by] [*W. K. Geen.*

"THE OARS HAVE LOST THEIR BLADES AND THE FISH THEIR SIZE."

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It is pleasant to be successful; but an empty creel does not matter nearly so much as you may at first suppose, provided you have spent a happy day, and taught or learnt a lesson, although it be only to love the country more.

CHAPTER VII.

A DAY WITH THE TEELIN SCHOOLMASTER—"POLLACK CRESCENT"—SALMON FISHING IN THE ATLANTIC.

A DAY'S sea-fishing with my son, and with Pat, Billy and that truly great sportsman, the Teelin schoolmaster,—given a calm day for Billy's sake into the bargain—is a pleasure to be anticipated with stirrings of great expectations.

It was Saturday, and the bare-footed boys, with many holes and coloured patches in their scanty garments, were boisterously happy as we passed them *en route* for Teelin Pier. Their joyous greeting left no room for signs of dread of birch or irksome tasks. They whooped their loudest by way of salutation, and the smile they got in return told plainly that boys and master were happy in their everyday relations.

This to me, who have had occasion to make a lengthened, loving fight—not finished yet—to remain a boy for boys' sakes, was a pleasing sight, and I turned upon the schoolmaster with, "How have you managed this?" "I am a father, Mr. Geen, and it's my children's love that I shall crave for beyond all other blessings. So I have thought

the problem out how best to get it, and, to be sure of my success, it's every man's child's respect I'll strive for."

I have already said that it was to Mr. Boyle I was indebted for the boat we used. On returning it each night we had sent a few specimens of our takes to its owner, and, no doubt, the carrier had told great tales of our success and the tackle we used. Hence his desire to be with us.

On the day previous to the one of which I am writing I had lost a bait, and, as it was of a new pattern and the only one of the kind that I had, I told Boyle of my misfortune. With a confident smile he reassured me, saying, "You'll soon have it back, Mr. Geen. I have only to let my boys know you have lost something, and they'll find it, whatever it is, if it's on land." His prophecy came true, for on the Monday, while I was fishing in the river, a little well-fed, smiling, shoeless Pat brought the bait back to me.

Prior to our coming, sea-fishing with rods was a thing unknown, and the cleverest pollack fisher, the schoolmaster, got his hauls with thick cord hand-lines, aided by keen study of the fish's haunts and the most favourable state of the tide for each spot. Since then he has made a rod to our pattern. He has a fine line, and leads and wire that will last him many a year.

Kirk got the preference in the lending of a rod to our guest, with the plea that he needed a few

more photos; but, instead of devoting himself to picture-gathering, he was pleased to teach the use of winches. He found his pupil apt, and, as the fish were on the feed, there was no lack of opportunity for actual practice.

After Mr. Boyle's first success we turned back to give the artist his chance of taking a picture of the spot.

Unfortunately, it is as impossible for a photograph to convey any adequate idea of the grandeur of the scenery of this part of the coast as it is for me to do so in writing. I have seen big cliffs in the north of Scotland, and I know every indentation in the grand cliffs of the north of Cornwall and of the Scilly Islands, but all I have ever seen became small when looking up the mighty perpendicular heights of Slieve League or Teelin Head.

Our learned companion's love was undisguisedly with his people and the land that gave him birth. His every sentence breathed admiration for all we saw, and there could be no doubt, as their faces showed it, that he was giving expression to the sentiments of Billy and Pat, who were much less fortunate in the gift of speech. They fairly beamed with pleasure as the eloquent exponent of their thoughts told with vividness the many legends, stories, or facts, that every point, recess, or cave, was credited with in his wonderful memory; and when he sang a tuneful Irish song their faces showed that their delight had reached its highest, and they

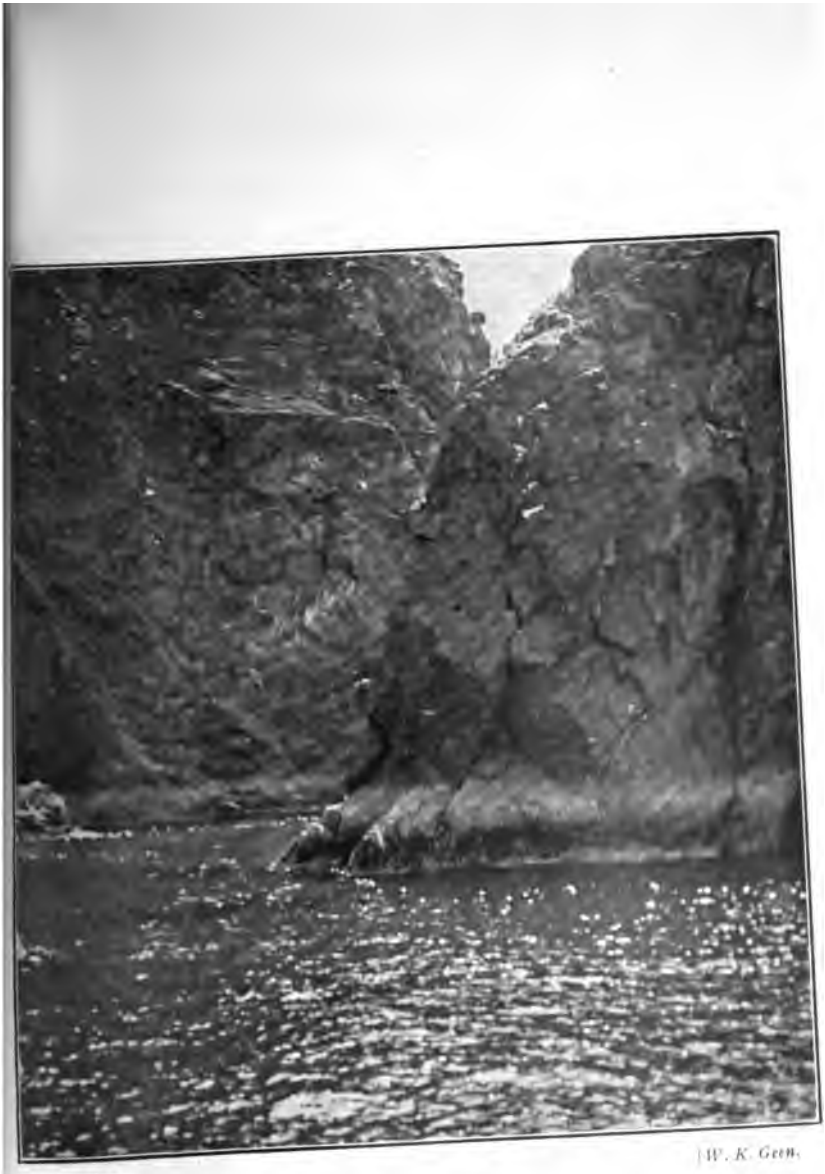

Photo by] [W. K. Green.

TEELIN HEAD.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

joined heartily in the chorus, glad of such an opportunity to relieve their pent-up feelings.

Chorus.

"O the Shamrock, the green, immortal Shamrock!
Chosen leaf
Of bard and chief,
Old Erin's native Shamrock!"

He told his stories with such terseness and brevity, so delicately intermingled with wit and pride, as made it impossible not to hope that he had more and more in store. Now and then a funny, laughter-making story, or perhaps a pathetic one (he lightly tripped from one to the other), would be cut in twain by a wild Irish interjection that told of fish, winch, and trouble.

When the tide commenced to flow, as it did about eleven, and stirred the fish in earnest, we were both so busy that his stories became more and more disjointed, until interjections actually predominated, and I could not make head or tail of what he said.

At Carrington Head the tide was almost as much as our boatmen could well manage, and several times when our lures were just abreast the point we got a fish, and sometimes two, which it was impossible to bring against the rush of water, so we had to fall back to gaff it and then stem the torrent once again. These many trying efforts made the boatmen thirsty, and once again Pat was too quick for Billy, got the bottle to his mouth and

held it there. Billy was patient, very patient, as if he would like him just to clear the bottle out; but, at the critical moment, his heroism deserted him, and he fairly leaped on Pat as he exclaimed, "It's divil a taste you'll be laving me."

Our men, being refreshed, made another effort to get round the point, and, to assist them, we kept our lines out until they were round and out of the greatest sweep of water. Then I got them to hold the boat steady while we paid our lines back towards the point from which we had taken so many fish.

We spent a profitable half-hour in this way, and Boyle was quick to note the advantages it contained for one who sometimes wanted to go pollacking and had no one to row for him. He could anchor his boat in any flow of water that was sufficiently heavy to carry his bait to the desired spot and there keep it spinning.

Even in a well-manned boat an hour of this method of fishing is a great rest; indeed, on more than one occasion my men have lunched while so anchored, and I have lunched and fished; lunched with fishy fingers, filled my pipe with ditto, smoked and been happy.

Already our boat was too full of fish to think of laying out our luncheon, which had been put up with the view of entertaining a guest; so, for that reason and because we were wolfishly hungry, we landed on a rock that is in the centre of a

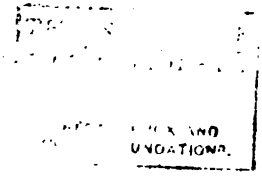

AND
UNDATIONS.

Photo by] [*W. K. Geen.*

POLLACK CRESCENT.

crescent-shaped bay, of which Boyle told such wonderful tales that we christened it "Pollack Crescent," and, while drinking our guest's health, we expressed the hope that he would always find fish there, especially this afternoon, when we should not only have the pleasure of seeing him kill them with a rod, but hear him talk to them as no other living man did or could, while telling a good story at the same time.

It was arranged, on restarting, that Kirk should remain on his perch while we were rowed to and fro the crescent, until he should get a chance of getting a snap at us while we were both engaged with fish. The opportunity soon came, but, as I am now told, the glare was too great and the camera's position not favourable. However, I think so much of Pollack Crescent that I give it here, and at the same time I would advise you to pay a visit to it should you want real fun with pollack.

You will see that it is much sheltered and partly enclosed. The security it gains from this will be its greatest appeal to some sea-fishers, whose lack of temerity will not in this case be a bar to their getting big fish, for those in Pollack Crescent run to a great weight.

In Bunglass Bay we added to our store, but at a much slower pace, so our progress along the coast had fewer interruptions. This gave Mr. Boyle an opportunity to point out to us many points of interest in the grand cliffs of Slieve League, of

which we were now getting a splendid view. It frequently occurs that opportunity is given to take measure of the vast heights of these towering cliffs by small white specks which looked to me like small maggots, but your boatmen will tell you they are sheep.

At one time the wild goat was plentiful along this shore, but a few years since the last was shot, and now the hardy mountain sheep, less surefooted, risk their lives for the sweet grasses that grow here and there. So eager are they that they get into the most dangerous places and have to be rescued by men let down with ropes, and many are actually killed every year by falling over into the sea.

There is good fishing the whole of the way from Teelin Pier to Carrigan Head, from there to Rossarrel Point, and then to Malin Beg Pier, a distance of ten miles by sea.

You may, if you prefer it, make an early drive from Carrick to Malin Beg. You will there find good boats and men, and if you thoroughly fish the Doon point and the various small bays in its immediate neighbourhood, you will probably be delighted with your day's sport and the glorious views of cliffs and sea.

Another charming day, of sightseeing and good fishing combined, may be spent round the shores of the romantic Rathlin O'Birne Island, from the same advantageous starting-point, Malin Beg.

In our journey along the coast we had now and

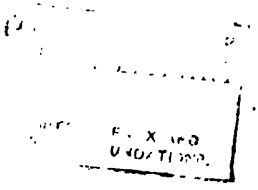


Photo by] [*W. K. Green.*

SALMON FISHERS.

then to haul our lines in, or take a deep turn out, to clear the long spread nets of salmon fishers, who, on account of private rights, have to ply their calling out and away from the more easily worked Bay and its lips, for a mile on either side.

There are quite a number of these fishers' boats, and splendid boats they are for such a stormy coast.

They were supplied by the Congested District Board to be paid for by instalments. The two seasons 1901 and 1902 had been utter failures; so the men were ready early in the year 1903, anxiously hoping to retrieve the lost ground and square up with those who so kindly trusted them.

Numbers of these fishermen are dependent on fishing for a livelihood, and, should the salmon fail them and the winter following be a stormy one, it is a blessing then that their greatest debt is to a Board composed of men who will think not one iota the less of them for inability to pay so brought about.

After many days, perhaps weeks, of spread nets and weary waiting the men have keenly anxious faces as they watch for the leap of an interrupted fish or the bobbings of a cork that shall tell of an entangled one.

The difference of expression on the faces of two crews whose nets were not five hundred yards apart, one of which had been phenomenally successful while the other had not a fish, was such a contrast as only Irish faces could possibly portray.

The man of books seemed to know and be

known by each member of every crew, and the mutual greetings which were continually passing, together with information given respecting their catches, showed sympathy and confidence.

We had passed these men several times on previous days when they appeared very stand-offish, but now they wore quite a different look and were full of mirthful speech to us.

There could be no doubt as to who was the medium that had brought about so great a change. Mr. Boyle would say something across the waves that brought replies which he interpreted. These brief conversations frequently ended in a request for matches. Of course the lines were soon wound in and we rowed to them, but after one or two such visits to other boats, I noticed there was always more desire to turn our catch over and inspect our tackle than to get the articles asked for. Just a word or two had worked a change from suspicious watchfulness to a hearty welcome.

I asked Mr. Boyle if he could explain so sudden a change. His answer was: "Quite easily. The rivers that empty into Teelin Bay have always attracted salmon and sea-trout in quantities sufficient to greatly aid the fisher-folk here to a livelihood, without their having to risk their lives and property in fishing for them in the Atlantic, the storms of which so frequently drive them to shore and to semi-idleness with its consequent privations. Can you wonder then that these men have strong

objections to the tax which it is sought to levy upon them and are chary of giving information to any but trusted friends? They love their country and are fighting a battle for bare existence rather than leave it; and you can guess where my sympathies are, but I can only help them by educating their boys, so that if the youngsters must go, they will know the best road to take."

During the last hour the wind had freshened and the waves increased to such volume as to make rowing more laborious and less effective. Added to these warnings came booms of crashing water against the hollow places in the rocks' surface. Clouds were gathering in from every quarter bringing rain that told of more to follow. We hurried to get our boat in order and put out an extra oar so as to hasten for Teelin Pier.

It may be interesting to my readers to learn that pollack abound on this coast from May to November. From personal experience I can speak of the first four months; and the following, taken from a letter to me dated Nov. 12 last, shows that they were as plentiful on the seventh of that month, and as large, as at any previous time:—

"Had a good pollack day on Saturday last. Caught thirty-eight large ones, most of them over 9 lb. The fishermen, dear silly old fellows, laughed at my simplicity in expecting to get pollack so late in the year. This success goes to bear out your idea that they can be taken here at any time."

"Dear silly old fellows." These are the parents.

I see the boys now as I saw them then. Boisterously happy boys in clothes which had holes square, holes round, holes in the knees, holes in the seats, and holes in their caps where their hair came through, but happiness and health in their every movement. It's just a chance they will need. Let us hope that the new-born industrial activity in Ireland, with its fast-increasing number of centres and their widening circles of influence, may be in time to give them such profitable employment as will keep them our fellow-subjects, of our—their—King.

CHAPTER VIII.

GLENCOLUMBKILLE—THE JAUNTING-CAR—A LEARNED IRISH PILGRIM.

SATURDAY night's copious rains made me curious as to their effect on the prospects of sport on the river; so I was early at the bridge on Sunday morning, and was gratified to learn that the long-waited-for opportunity had come for the salmon and sea-trout to travel up over the falls to find homes in the numerous pools of the ever-winding and twisting Glen river.

A river, especially when stocked, is a real living companion of which I am never tired. It draws me to its side, be other attractions what they may, with a certainty that gives my friends sure knowledge of my whereabouts.

No sooner is breakfast over on this occasion than I am ready for a start to enjoy the fresh breezes that are bringing the hanging rain-drops from trees and bushes. I want to be a witness of the river's bustle and haste to fulfil its mission of giving opportunities for the gathering in, and multiplication of, fish-life.

The stream is in grand volume, sufficient to

cover mid-stream boulders, and the prostrate grass and sedges on the banks tell that during the night it has been an angry torrent that the fish had to wait an abatement of before commencing their inland journey.

The surfaces of the eddies are still a swirling mass of *débris*, with here and there at their tails mats of rolled-up clotted froth, that spin round and round until fairly caught by the stream, when they speed off, to be driven against the rock at the next sharp bend, there to be unrolled and lost.

The ditches, too, had overflowed their limits and laid the crops, and were now so full that I had often to retrace my steps to the road, which runs conveniently near for many miles.

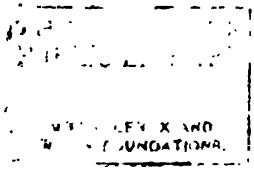
The sun at last struggled through the flying clouds, and soon shone with such assurance as left no room for fear of further rain. The birds were almost instantaneous in their responses to the brightened sky and their warblings were everywhere.

The sorrel-tinted grasses in the meadows, heavy with rain, were at first slow and patchy in responding to the wind's invitation to be gay, but the patches grew in size and number until the whole field, freed from its wet encumbrances, joined in the fun; and then the waves of grass played leap-frog while the stiff docks nodded approval.

The cowslips, with their graceful bendings and swayings, and the curtseying daisies seemed dancing

Photo by] [*W. K. Geen.*

"THE SUN AT LAST STRUGGLED THROUGH THE FLYING CLOUDS."



to the music of the ringing harebells. All Nature was in such a gloriously playful mood that I, who cannot sing, commenced a song of joy which was cruelly cut short by, "Oh, please, dad, don't."

Then my arm was taken, and I was gently turned right about face and told of my promised car drive to Glencolumbkille.

On our return to the hotel we found the anglers jubilant at their prospects and anxious for Sunday's quiet to give place to Monday's expected sport. Notwithstanding the day there was a bustling activity of preparation. Rods were put together, comparisons made of length, weight, and probable usefulness under the varying tests they would be put to, now the Glen river was in ply and with plenty of fresh-run fish.

Every one seemed some one else, and not one of the silent, sky-watching, glass-tapping, down-in-the-dumps individuals remained to remind you how sour it is possible to look when you have nothing else to do.

These exhibitions of rods, lines and lures, with plenty of leisure to compare one with the other, aided by the eloquence of the exhibitors, who will favour you with remarkable incidents which tend to prove their rod, line or lure so far perfect that they do not desire a better, are really most interesting, and if you watch and listen you will frequently get useful ideas that have cost much time and thought to their possessors.

My son is at my elbow and the car waits, so I have to lose a chance of getting wisdom cheaply.

I think the jaunting-car the jolliest means of locomotion ever invented. Its speed, spring and sway are provocative of merriment and laughter, and are only comparable to a good friendly shake of the shoulders by strong arms and loving hands. Sooner or later you must laugh, and be ever ready to laugh again, though this will be difficult until you have realised that the muscles of your face are not needed to help you to retain your seat. Pat himself is under the influence of the car as soon as he is on board, and becomes twice an Irishman when he is driving at full speed with only inches between the nozzle of his wheel and that of some other daring fellow's car. His trust in Fate is, I think, most clearly of all shown in his car driving. The worst of lurches, the thinnest hair-breadth escapes from overturning, do not even interrupt his chatter.

Among the passengers the fear of falling off is the cause of strange and comical incidents when persons of opposite sex are seated side by side. If there be no fear in the lady, then the gentleman will certainly be timorous, so that a sharp turn in the road, a jolt over a stone, a sudden whipping-up of the horse, or any one of the anythings that may happen, causes either the gentleman to seek support from the easily-encircled neigh-

bouring waist, or the lady to seize in convulsive grip the gentleman's knee, or the trousers where the knee should be. It is strange, passing strange, but I will pledge that that same pair would, were they seated back to back, perform that very same journey, encounter the same jerkings and joltings, with no more thought of care than if they were safely perched on the comfortable back seat of an English dog-cart.

Pat is at his best when driving, and, if your wits be quick enough to follow his, you will be able to store up much cud for future rumination. As I was driving one day I noticed that my jarvey addressed passing peasants of his acquaintance in the Irish tongue, while to his horse he used such words as I was familiar with at home in England. Impelled by curiosity, I stood up and leaned over the seat, and, with a smile, said, "Now, Pat, why is it that you speak to your friends in Irish, but always talk in English to your horse?" "Why, your honour, says Pat, "isn't it good enough for him?"

This little tale will give you some idea of the subtlety of an Irishman's humour, and you will need some length of acquaintance with Erin before you will clearly know whether you may indulge your laughter freely, or whether that laugh is doomed to die away in a sickly smile as you realise, too late, that Pat has got one home through your armour that's a little bit against yourself. Be on your guard always, for I have known him spend

a day in proving himself an innocent for my diversion, only to find in the last fly he threw over me there was a hook that pricked and brought me to bank, quite sad, making the balance of the day against me.

There is another talent which they possess to an equally remarkable degree. It is even harder to detect since they are not so generally credited with it. Every word, every smile, every action of an Irishman is prompted by a far-sighted and definite purpose. "God bless yer honour, sorr, and it's ivery one of meself that's pleased to see yer honour" sounds very nice, but it is sometimes pure blarney deliberately intended to blarney you.

Laugh at Paddy's joke, then be smart, very smart, and you may catch him with a broad grin on his face or with tongue-extended cheek that was intended for your back. You will find his talk seductive in the extreme. It is full of milk and honey. He prefers to invent a bit of truth, with divil a lie in it, rather than impart anything likely to be unpleasant. Misled by the careless, reckless impetuosity of his demeanour, you might expect to be the confidant of his joys and sorrows, his faith and beliefs, his aspirations and fears at the first interview. Not at all; you will sooner get all this from a Scotsman at such short notice.

Our host is a great judge of horses, and is consequently proud, and deservedly so, of his stud, but

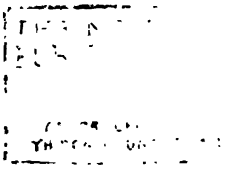
no matter how clever you may be, sooner or later a regrettable purchase gets admittance to your stables. On the previous day he had taken me to see one that had been sent from Dublin : a very nice-shaped animal in every respect, excepting his ears ; and his services were offered me for this day's drive. I am glad that the prejudice created by the horse's look at me with one eye, while he dropped the ear on the same side, caused me to decidedly prefer one I had already ridden behind.

We started with an excellent turn-out and a most capable, chatty and well-informed driver, who soon brought us to the brow of the hills that opened the wide expanse of country that sloped away seawards and permitted us to enjoy salt breezes, blended with a scent of peat and heather.

It was a lovely drive to Malin More, where we dismounted to visit its most beautiful bay, where once again we had the satisfaction of seeing some splendid works of the Congested District Board, consisting of a well-sheltered and massive quay, a curing house, and a small fleet of Atlantic fishing boats.

The washing of the mighty waves that dash against this part of the coast cuts strange devices in the varying hardness and tenacity of the cliffs, which are so high and perpendicular as to necessitate great circumspection in approaching the edges.

Sheep could be seen nibbling the grass on tiny



It is impossible to look upon this spot, so remote, so barren, and of such world-wide holy renown without being deeply moved; and these associations are all the more interesting and impressive when they are generously detailed to you by a lover of the place.

We were fortunate in this respect, for we came upon a pilgrim in the shape of a learned Irish gentleman, who, as he told us, had come there from America to pay his respects once more to the memory of the godly saint, and who was not unwilling to deal out to us from his store of knowledge rich information to feed the curiosity evoked in us by this romantic spot. He told us to visit, if we had time, Rathlin O'Birne Island to see its lighthouse, its sacred wells, and its people who had been in the habit of worshipping, until comparatively recently, the figurehead from the bows of one of the ill-fated gaily-decked ships of the Armada, which had come to its doom upon the rocks of their island. This, he said, they must have deemed a figure of the Holy Virgin, and in that belief had given to it centuries of adoration.

So much more he told us of the history and religion of Ireland as to move our admiration for his erudition, and running through all that he said we could not fail to notice that pronounced love of country which is in all the Irish, learned or unlearned.

There is a nice, clean-looking private hotel in the

village, where, with our tea, we were given a taste of salmon taken from the bay close at hand, and, judging from the boats we saw, sea-fishing could be much enjoyed at Glencolumbkille.

As we were journeying homewards I called a halt to ask a question of a man who stood at his cottage door, with the result that I was soon inside, seated and chatting. At first the room seemed very small for so many occupants, but this impression became much modified as I discovered that everything and everybody had their place.

The balls of wool of varied colours hanging from a beam, together with a roll of tweed upon a shelf, were soon the subject of conversation. I saw the cloth unrolled, approved the colourings and texture, and became the owner of it at fifteenpence per yard. Quite a bargain! as, in addition to the merits of the tweed, I have had the pleasure of persuading my tailor to do what he says he has never done before, make a suit with other people's cloth; and, judging from his manner, he would rather give up business altogether than do it again. Poor little fellow, he did seem hurt.

The roll of tweed, less the suit length, I cut in half and sent to my two daughters for costumes. I sincerely hope their dressmakers' feelings will not be harrowed as my tailor's were.

How different to deal with was the tailor who measured me when I was a boy. Mr. and Mrs. Holloway always arrived at our house punctually at

eight o'clock, and, at a quarter past, they sat down to breakfast, having previously laid out upon the table, on which he was to sit, an imposing array of tailor's requisites.

Country tailors are credited with having huge appetites. Can this be accounted for by their sitting so much with their legs crumpled up in front of them? I heard Mary, our dairymaid, tell Gibbs that sitting on a table as if about to hatch a brood of chickens would naturally make a man as hungry as a broody hen.

It is admitted that they have a weakness for a liver and bacon breakfast. Holloway was very fond of it, and, as he had to walk three miles to reach our house, there could be no wonderment at his needing a second helping of such a savoury dish; but it must have been some other tailor that, wishing for yet another helping at breakfast, got it by promising he would consider it to be his dinner, and, having eaten that, got another plateful, saying that should count as being for his supper; after eating which he packed up his tools, saying, in reply to an inquiry, he never worked after supper It could not have been Holloway, as Mrs. Holloway was always there, and was most particular about her husband's food and drink, particularly the latter.

Mary, the dairymaid, was much to me, and so she was to Gibbs. I was with her when Gibbs came from the stables, got behind us before we knew that

he was there, and twisted Mary's head quite round and whispered something to her lips. "Fairies hate 'tell-tits,' and might carry them off at any moment. They sha'n't have you." That's what Mary said, as she patted my head when Gibbs was gone.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GLEN RIVER AND ITS POOLS—SALMON'S FOOD.

THE hour has struck, and we fishermen are all punctual to the breakfast that is to precede the drawing for beats. The absence of rain during the night and the previous day has given the river the time necessary to trim itself into perfect order.

There were six of us interested; consequently the river was divided into that number of shares, each consisting of, or containing, four to six pools. It was noticeable that some were expressing a preference for the lower beats, while others would wish to have the middle portions. I was hoping to get my order for the upper pools, to which, as I knew from long experience, the first shoals of salmon invariably hasten. There may be doubters of this theory—indeed, I know there are to any theory concerning this fish. I think myself justified in my opinion inasmuch as I have found this to be the case on all the rivers I have fished, and it is particularly noticeable that in the Tay first successes are not in the lower reaches, not in the main river at all, in fact, but as far up in one of its branches as Glen Lyon, where, as early as January 15, I have

often taken fish which, to all appearances, had not been more than twenty-four hours away from salt water. Long ago I arrived at the conclusion that there is such order in the proceedings of these animals, while in fresh water, as leaves no room for doubt that Nature has definitely designed for the more vigorous early comers to travel on and up, while the later arrivals, fatter and more fuller developed, take easier journeys, and to the fattest, fullest and latest are assigned the most easily reached lower beds.

Although there can be few anglers who have had more opportunities of studying the habits of salmon, or more love in pursuing that study, than I have, yet I speak about the fish "with bated breath and whispered humbleness." My experience reaches back to long before the time when these fish did not, so wiseacres said, feed in fresh water. I was certainly a little upset by this pronouncement, for I had seen them feed, and had more than once been compelled to cut my worm-baited hook from the depths of their gullet.

In the great controversy that arose on the subject the "feeders" held the upper hand, until a professor got hold of a fish, examined it, and said that feeding in fresh water on the part of a salmon was an impossibility owing to certain excremental disabilities that the fish had to submit to on its entrance to fresh waters. I never think of this opinion of the professor without being reminded of the wild cats

of Scotland, which are said to have become awfully wild because of the same imperfection in their corporal economics.

I do not really desire to lessen my readers' respect for the opinions of learned professors, unless it be when they have been compelled to give them forth on subjects of which they know nothing before a Select Committee of the House of Lords, which perhaps, nay, probably, knew less. Their Lordships, in 1860, desired Professor Quekett's ideas on the salmon, and he, amid his other judgments, was of opinion that salmon travel some distance along the coast, and probably into deep water, in search of the ova of the echinus or sea-urchin. Professor Huxley disagreed with this view as regards the nature of their sea food, and preferred to believe that it consists chiefly of a numerous class of small creatures — entomostracous crustacea — found in semi-solid masses upon the sea's surface. Dr. Knox, on the other hand, considered that their food must consist of the ova of various kinds of star-fish. Put concisely, then, we must imagine a *menu* for salmon thus—ova of sea-urchins, insect soup, and star-fish roe. This would seem to be diet for toothless fish, and not for such a robust feeder with such powerful serrated jaw as the salmon has, which, when he seizes your gudgeon or sprat, often makes mince-meat of it.

However, it matters not much, particularly now, which, if either, of these learned authorities is right

as to their food at sea. Our immediate concern is as to what they take most readily while in the Glen river.

The answer to the question can be given without hesitation—"Worms and flies," or, more properly, "Flies generally; worms when the water is much discoloured."

The best flies are the Claret Jay, Black Jay, Fiery Brown, The Childers, and Durham Ranger. I am a firm believer that the size of my flies has had much more to do with my success than pattern or colour. Of course I have no doubt that there is need for care in selecting the colours that experience teaches us are most likely to be attractive under the peculiar conditions of the moment as to sky and water. I have also good reason for my faith that while two flies may be exactly alike in appearance while in your hand, they are something very different while being worked. Choose the most lively then, and let it be on a No. 8 Limerick for the salmon and a No. 10 for the white trout.

The majority of my readers need only to be told that the river can, in most places, be covered by a moderate cast, and that the fish seldom exceed 10 lb., and are most frequently between 6 lb. and 8 lb., to know what rod to select for use.

I found my 14-feet whole-cane grilse rod, 20 oz. in weight, by Ogden Smith, with a line just sufficiently light not to overweight it, an efficient and enjoyable instrument for the work I had to do. The

use of implements of just adequate weight and strength adds immensely to the pleasure of sport, and a rod of the length and weight I have mentioned, which vibrates to the last inch of the butt at each cast, will be found quite capable of mastering, in skilful hands, the largest Glen fish ; while, should it be but a small one that comes on, you will not be deprived of pleasure by a non-sensitive medium.

To the beginner I will venture to add : "Be particular in the selection of your winch. Let it be a light one—not necessarily of small barrel—or you may put everything out of balance and proportion."

My desire for an up-river beat was not gratified on this occasion. On the contrary, I had to be satisfied with No. 1, which commences at the Tidal Pool, where I saw a number of salmon that were evidently in too great a hurry to even notice what I had to offer. I headed them off at the "Junction Pool," and was in time to see them at "The Leap." Then I hurried to the "Gravel Pool," where a running fish flopped over my dropper and got caught in the tail by the larger fly. I was not the richer for this experience, except that he hastened my movements to "Micky Harvey's Pool," where he made a leap and got clear.

I was equally unsuccessful in the "Frank Paddy," the "John Bug's," and the "Bridge" Pools, and as by this time I was close to the hotel I ventured in with the hope of hot luncheon. Here I was not disappointed, and, while smoking a cigar after-

wards, the news came to me that fish were being taken in the higher reaches. I returned to the river with the determination of giving my attention to the white trout, and I was rewarded with quite a nice bit of sport and a creel of fish.

Ten salmon were brought in that day, varying in weight from 5 lb. to 10 lb., and many exciting tales were told of bigger ones lost.

On the following day I worked upwards past "Paddy's Pool" to the "Long Pool," where I caught my first fish and rose another. I also got one in "Wee Bridge Pool," and rose two other fish in "John Vredean Pool."

In addition to the two salmon, I got several large white trout; so that I had quite a pleasant day, and, I am pleased to add, every one else had been as successful, or more so, than I had been.

There are some splendid pools for sport in the third and fourth day's beats on this pretty river, and should you find them in ply, it would be nothing wonderful for you to get half-a-dozen or more fish. Even in No. 6 beat there are some most useful pools, in which, when the water is low, you will be sure to see a number of salmon; and, when there has been rain, you are certain to get rare fun, for, when they are hooked, they rush up and down from pool to pool.

My gillie was more at home on the river than on the sea. He appeared to have quite an affectionate knowledge of each pool, which caused him

to approach them with tender tread, bated breath, and wonderful expectation. It helps to keep you cheerful when your man is so brimful of hope; he is really worth a trifle more per day to men who, like myself, dislike a face that turns their breakfast sour.

Billy's cheerfulness was not the only help. He prompted me with the nicest care to each likely spot, and once, when I had risen a fish at the brink of a fall, rested it and risen it again, and again, he explained to me that I had failed to hook the fish because it had not as yet been able to quite reach the fly, and that, to enable it to do so, the fly must go over the fall, which would cause it to return by a slightly different route. I handed him the rod, the better to show me; he made a cast and got the fish. Billy is clever with the rod.

There is not a single pool in all the river but what can be fished either up or down. For trout you would most frequently fish up and for salmon down, but there are times when you may with profit wade up behind a shy salmon and cast your lure as delicately as you can just beyond his nose, showing him the fly only. Should he accept your offer, remember that your fly is not a luscious morsel that will please his palate and then be swallowed; strike quickly, as you may safely do when taking him from behind. It's very different when fishing down; then you should invariably wait until you feel the tug. I know it is a great temptation when, just as

the fly comes round to meet the stream, you see a boil that tells the fish has risen; but please do not strike; he has missed or declined, and may come again almost instantly.

I must not omit mention of the Owenwee river, which flows out of Lough Oona and joins the Glen just as that river empties itself into the bay. It is about five miles in length, and offers a splendid day's fishing to those who like to fish upwards from pool to pool until the river becomes a mere overflow from a lake or lakes that are stocked with fish. Both salmon and white trout run up this river, but not in such numbers as up the Glen. I have not fished all the lakes, but I saw fish that had been taken from Loughs Aura, Oona, and Divna, and I got, myself, quite a nice basket from Lough Agh, which is up amongst the mountains that overlook the sea. Be careful when intending a visit to this lake to bring plenty of provisions, for it is hunger-provoking in the extreme, and a day spent there will ensure a night's dreamless sleep.

My son gave his attention to fishing the lakes and taking photos with a newly-made friend, who had a rod and camera. I was not jealous, at least, not very.

That the fish, while in the Glen river, have a prosperous time is shown by the wonderful records of takes both by anglers and netsmen.

It requires some knowledge of the wonderful reproductiveness of the salmon to be able to credit

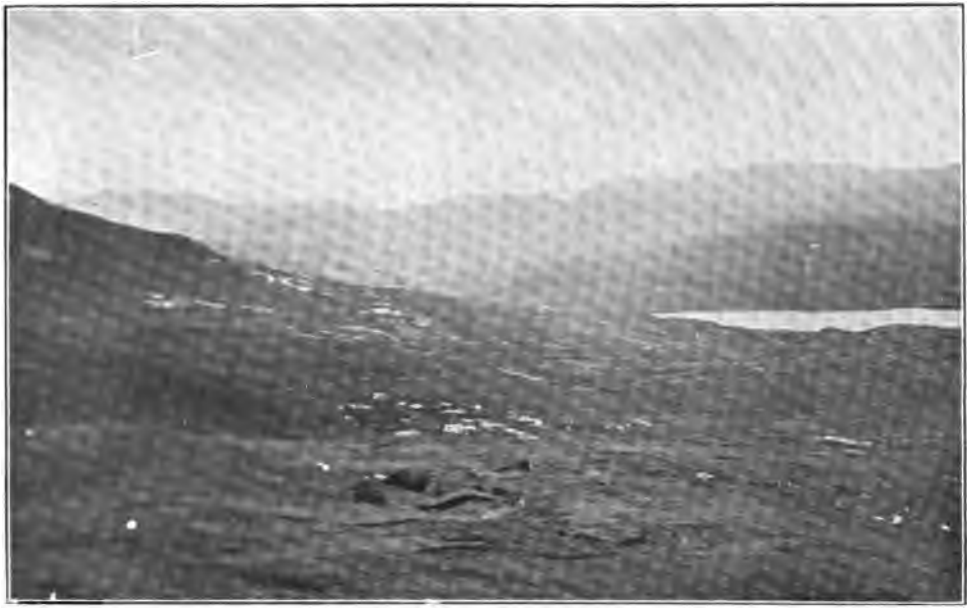
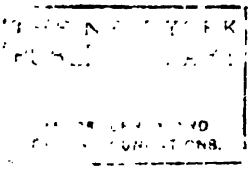


Photo by] [*W. K. Geen.*

"UP AMONGST THE MOUNTAINS"



the number of fish taken during the past season, and to those recorded must be added numbers of others that were taken by those who, for obvious reasons, did not speak, except perhaps to their confessors, of their secret captures.

Salmon come into the bay with the flow of the tide, keeping to the centre until they reach the river, when, if the falls be negotiable, all is well; but, if not, they have to return to the sea, which they invariably do by a course which takes them round one or other of the sides, and, as the nets are set jutting out from the shore so as to thwart this, a thinning of the shoals takes place at each of their attempts.

The whole of these nets in the bay are worked by Sir James Musgrave's men, who, while I was there, took as many as 624 fish in one day.

The fish taken by the fishermen beyond the limits of the bay, while not quite a secret, is not so easily ascertainable, but I was present at the emptying of a grand haul of eighty-seven.

It must be remembered that this rocky coast rises direct from deep water, and so care and skill are required to gather in such a quantity without loss. The difficulty of getting this vast mass of fish into the boat requires that every man of the crew should know his work and do it at the right moment. One fish, finding its way out round an insufficiently splashed corner, may be followed by all the others.

The fact of the sea being bound in by an almost

perpendicular wall without one single landing-place for a net has made these men adepts in the needed method, and when once the word "fish" is uttered everything proceeds at lightning speed, yet faultlessly.

Wherever the owner of a river himself holds and works the main net fishery it is a matter of the utmost consequence to him that the greatest possible number of fish that the river can find healthy accommodation for should be allowed to ascend; so anglers in all such cases have the fullest justification for expecting sport. There are no traps to stop the fish here; so, given a spate, all is well.

I add, with pleasure, that there is not a river that I have fished in during my many visits to Ireland that is so well looked after as this. The head keeper and Mr. Walker, our host, are real enthusiasts, who will, as I proved, watch through the long hours of the night to make a capture of poachers—they said it was a duty and looked quite pleased and excited. But that is a story to be told in connection with the pros and cons generally of the still far too prevalent practice of fish poaching in Ireland.

Photo by] [*W. K. Geen.*

"WITHOUT ONE SINGLE LANDING-PLACE FOR A NET."

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CHAPTER X.

THE OWENEA AND OWENTOCKER—MY GILLIE PAT—FAIR DAY AT ARDARA.

LIFE was pleasant at Carrick with its comfortable hotel, its chatty host, and the excellent fishings in sea, rivers, and lakes; but I came to see and hear as well as to fish, so the order was given for a car to take us on to Ardara.

The journey is only thirteen Irish miles but so interesting that we spent many happy hours in performing it. The dismounting from the car and climbing to this or that point of interest took much time, but the views obtained amply rewarded us, and we thought it profitably spent.

The road at first follows the Glen river with a gradual ascent for about six miles; then we had a steeper climb to the Pass of Glengesh, where the high rugged mountains, rising steeply on either side, form a picture of wildness and desolation that has kept itself free, for many a mile, of the cabin which in Ireland is almost everywhere. After this each turn in the road made a fresh picture to gladden the eye, and we were sorry when our destination came in sight.

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Ardara is near the mouths of the Owenea and Owentocker rivers, and is a pretty and interesting town. It is the centre of several industries, and, while there, you may make useful purchases of lace, hosiery, tweeds, or embroidered linens. It was at Ardara that I bought the unique afternoon tea-cloth which all my lady friends go into such raptures over that I anticipate the worker of it has orders that will last her lifetime.

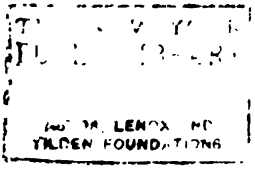
Mrs. McNelis, of the Nesbitt Arms, personally superintends all that pertains to the comfort of the visitors, and her sons are ever active in arranging for their sport. The two youngest are great car drivers, and are particularly proud of most of the animals they drive, while the eldest son has a store in which is collected a huge variety of cabin-manufactured goods. I think I am within the mark in saying that I saw two waggon loads of tweeds. My purchase of him was of a neat pattern, but bigger men with large ideas could suit themselves with elaborate designs and colours.

The Owenea is the principal river, and gives the best sport to salmon and sea-trout fishers, but at times the Owentocker makes an effort to be equal with its rival.

There are two other smaller rivers up which sea-trout run, and there are twelve lakes on which the hotel has boats. I was unfortunate in having quite low water during my week's stay, and so only tried the salmon twice.

Photo by] [*W. K. Geen.*

"CLIMBING TO THIS OR THAT POINT OF INTEREST."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I saw large numbers jumping in most of the pools, particularly in Janny Boyle's, Holly Bush, Whin Gardens, McGill's, and Brines Pools, but they were not in a taking mood, so I turned my attention to the trout, of which I got good baskets. Had I been a fortnight later my chances would have been good, as then the river rose and kept to a good fishing height for three weeks, during which period Mr. Lakin Warwick and three others got a hundred salmon between them.

We had a most pleasant day, and a splendid basket of brown trout, in Loughs Derryduff and Sheskinmore and the little stream that connects them. When captured, the fish were of three different over-all colours. Those taken in the rocky upstream beds were quite the usual colours, while what we took from the centre peaty pools were dark, and down in the lower reaches, where golden sand blown in from the sea-shore formed the bed, the fish were as if a golden varnish had been put over their ordinary colours.

When we reached Kilclooney Bridge I was longing for a cup of tea, so I knocked at Mr. Boyle's cabin and was told to come in, and the welcome I got from Miss Boyle reminded me of a verse of an old Irish song:

"Soon as you lift the latch, little ones are meeting you,
Soon as you're 'neath the thatch, kindly looks are greeting you;
Scarely have you time to be holding out the fist to them—
Down by the fireside you're sitting in the midst of them."

I was soon seated in an apron-dusted chair, and, while the kettle was receiving the necessary attention, I was taking mental note of the unusually comfortable home. An open door showed a boarded-floor bedroom, with quite a capacious bed that had a many-coloured coverlet which constantly brought my eyes back to it, although it was present to my mind that it would be more becoming to keep my eyes in any other direction.

Truth is frequently so strange that I have no appreciation for those who think it necessary to make a call on their imagination to paint it. Indeed, you have at times to ask for much faith to get facts believed; still I never hesitate, but boldly state them as they occurred.

I was early taught not to say, "Upon my honour," and that to be disbelieved was not half so bad as to be disbelieving. King David in his haste and Commissioner Kerr at his leisure have said, "All men are liars!" Anglers have no grievance against these eminent authorities, but we should like now and again to protest against the common belief that we have special gifts in the art of saying that which is not, and doubling that which is.

Strange compensation for our ill repute lies in the fact that anglers are listened to more eagerly than the followers of any other sport. Can the reason be that with us what is false is palpably so, and what is true is equally apparent?

Miss Boyle gave me a lovely cup of tea, and, while I drank it, she chatted in such a taking way that I could not refrain from hoping she would offer me a second cup. This she did, but time was valuable to her, and, having filled my cup, she produced the identical piece of fine linen which the Fates decided I was to purchase. The last shamrock was being worked into it, and I was inquiring if it would be for sale, and what would be the price, when the flapping of wings brought my eyes again to the bedroom and the bright coverlet, and I saw, at a glance, that there was a change in it, caused by a Minorca hen which was seated in the centre. She was looking at me first with one red-beaded eye and then, turning her head, she looked at me with the other. Miss Boyle had evidently not kept her eyes on her work or she would not have remarked, "It's a lucky egg she will be laying you this day, with her eyes winking at you all the while."

Very shortly afterwards the hen, with clamorous clucking, flew from her comfortable nest, and again the appearance of the coverlet was changed, for the black hen had disappeared and a white egg formed its centre.

A lucky egg in Ireland is double-yolked, and the egg contributed in so strange a fashion was double-yolked, and brought luck to all concerned. Miss Boyle has now more orders for her work than she can execute, although she has other clever fingers to help her.

It was to smiling Mary at the Nesbitt Arms that I gave the egg to cook and, when I told her under what circumstances I had become possessed of it, she expressed no surprise; on the contrary, she replied, "My cousin Annie Boyle's hins would sure to be plased with your bargaining and give you a lucky egg to boot."

I thought I knew all there was to learn about hens, and, of course, I know they regulate their efforts to suit the market price, but that they took cognisance of deals in linen was quite new to me.

My first fortune was made by collecting eggs at twopence per score, and I considered myself up to every dodge of laying hens, and it was only now and then that one outwitted me and showed she had done so by appearing later on with quite a following of little balls of wool that tried to walk and peck as much like their mother as they could. At certain periods my income was increased by the hens omitting to put shells on their eggs. These required great care, for which I was paid one penny per score extra.

Professor Miall, so we read, is completely puzzled by the egg. Lecturing at the Royal Institution, he confessed that no one knows quite how the egg-shell is formed. How lucky it would have been for me had the old woman who had charge of the poultry at home been as ignorant in this matter as the professor. She scattered lime about

which the fowls ate, and the eggs were hard again for much too long a period.

Among the gillies at Ardara are two brothers, Pat and Morris, whom Kirk instantly dubbed "the antitheses." My gillie, Pat, was indeed a contrast to Morris, his brother, whose face, when I first saw it, while the rest of him was hidden from me, I took to be a priest's in the full enjoyment of all and sundry of the fruits of his position. He was Dr. Wright's gillie; had he been mine I am sure I should have rebelled at his every suggestion until I had unlearnt my first impression.

Pat was such an unobtrusive little fellow, so thin and diminutive, that his large spaniel-like eyes looking straight at me won my protection at their first glance. "He was a shivery soul that needed soft, sunny weather."

Fortunately the impedimenta of our expeditions were more cumbersome than weighty, and all would have gone well had not his love of throwing the fly been so frequently and overwhelmingly aroused as to cause him, when allowed to take a few casts, to be quite unmindful of our relative positions, and I have toiled painfully and perspiringly in his rear to be told when I did overtake him, "Shure, I disremembered, sir, that I had anybody wid me but meself." Had he been his brother Morris I would have said several things to him, but the soft, brown, pleading eyes, set in a wee, feminine face

with its pink flush brought my teeth together before a word escaped.

Of course, I determined that I would somehow reverse the order of things, so that Pat should be gillie and I the fisherman, and on one day I succeeded, but that was an unlucky day. The little fellow fell asleep, and a cow came and overhauled each and every article he had in his care, and finally decided that my new waterproof fishing-coat was most to her liking and was chewing it with as much satisfaction as she would her cud after a day in clover. When I woke him he said, "I quite disremembered you, sir, but I was draming of you."

I have often thought of little Pat and his love for my rod. He wrote me a letter, which I think so characteristic of him that I add it to this :—

Hillhead
Ardara Co. Donegal
January 18, 1904.

DEAR GREEN

If you could come here about the middle of May it would I think be a good time for fishing. Anyhow I will lit you know when I think there is a good prospect for fishing. I have had a good day's fishing alone with myself on Oct. 1, 1903, but I only caught three salmon.

I sincerely hope you are well, and wish you a happy new year.

I am your
humble servant PATRICK EARLY.

Ardara, as I have said, is a commercial centre, and you would enjoy making purchases there, especially during fair time, as that occasion brings

Photo by] [*J. A. Burrows, Strabane.*

ARDARA.

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together an assemblage which affords a splendid opportunity of seeing the active side of Irish life while making your bargains.

Possibly the first thing to strike you would be the miscellaneous gathering of every possible kind of commodity, but, sooner or later, you must be impressed with the fact that the majority of the men are fine, strapping fellows, with an air of I-don't-care-for-anybody in their attitudes, movements, speech, and twinkling eyes. It might be, of course, that your attention would first be attracted by the charms of pretty feminine faces. There will be quite a gathering of ladies, whose charms do not end with their face. The proud poise of their heads, their suppleness of form, and the flowing lines of their figures enable them to wear with matchless grace the poorest garment, and with their luminous, grey eyes, shaded by long dark lashes, and their modesty, they form perfect pictures :—

"They don't ogle a man
O'er the top of their fan,
Till his heart's in a flame, till his heart's in a flame;
But though bashful and shy,
They've a look in their eye
That just comes to the same, just comes to the same."

You really should have been present at the fair held on the second and third days of August, 1904, as then, in addition to the monster crowds, and their usual inbringings, every person of real importance was there, some of them presiding at stalls

for the sale of the best that loving fingers could produce to aid in paying off the debt incurred in building the imposing Catholic Church in which they worship.

What might not the ladies of your party have purchased; and what a delight to show the lovely Irish embroideries and lace to their friends at home!

Those who love a mild gamble by which a good cause may benefit, conjointly with themselves, would have had a rare chance of winning prizes contributed by numerous notabilities, His Holiness the Pope heading the list.

A lady in charge of a stall of Irish needlework sent me 100 lottery tickets, and as I was not in need of 100 prizes, I sold tickets to friends, some of whom were very lucky. I wished to help the Irish lady who desired to be helpful to her Church. Should we not wish well to all religions that leave us a little humanity, and teach us to play the game and tell the truth?

I am not a Roman Catholic; I am supposed to be a severe West Country Nonconformist. How saintly, how severe on the most trifling fault the extra-quality Dissenter can be! And how exacting that loud-proclaiming mahogany collecting-box was, sometimes by its silence! It was most ingeniously constructed with a sounding-board that told what each one's offering was to listening neighbours. I had often spent my Saturday's money

unmindful of Sunday's terror, so I could not always give, although the collecting saint with one eye on the box and the other heavenwards gave me time enough. The everlasting seconds he held it to me and the hatred of my little heart toward that man are as fresh in my memory as though it were but yesterday.

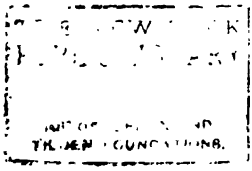
The tales of sudden ailments that my mother listened to about chapel-time on Sundays were infinitely more pathetic than any of those I told to keep me away from school. Which religion, how much of it, how little of it, is good for us? None can lay down this law; for no two persons can becomingly carry the same load of it. Little folks can best learn most of what they need in the fields and woods with dad; the sun will be sure to shine on such companionship; and it is by mother's knees they can understand, as nowhere else, the crowning lesson. There would be no bogies then. My mother often told me about fairies when I stayed home from chapel, and I understood her even when she spoke in the softest voice, yet I never could understand where "Jerusalem the Golden" was—whether near, far off, or in Heaven—although the preacher spoke loudly and thumped.

CHAPTER XI.

CARLIN'S CABIN AND HIS BOATS — IRISH SUPERSTITIONS — AN AFTER-DINNER CHAT ABOUT GILLIES—THE FAIRIES' CASTLE.

THOMAS CARLIN, of Cloghboy, Loughros Beg Bay, Ardara, a great authority on sea-fishing, was recommended to us as being the man who possessed not only the necessary knowledge, but also boats suitable for the bay or the open sea. We had no difficulty in finding Thomas Carlin's cabin, in which we were invited to stay while one of the many children was sent to fetch the father, who was busy in the hayfield. I tried again and again to count the young Carlins; but so numerous were they, and so mixed with the old donkey which had two of the children hanging to her neck—a favourite and not for sale—the young donkey, daughter of the old donkey—price seven shillings—the pigs, the fowls, the ducks and the geese, that I always failed; sometimes because some of the children were so nearly alike that I feared I must be counting them twice. I determined to give it up and ask Mrs. Noah if she knew how many there were. The reply was given with a proud, happy smile, as she tightened her hold on the babe at her breast, "Just ten, sir—

Photo by] A DONEGAL CABIN. [*W. K. Geen.*



as yet." And it seemed to me, sitting in the midst of all that varied life, that the cabin went on echoing her words, "Just ten, sir—as yet."

Carlin was quite ready to relinquish his hay-making in favour of the proposal to go a-fishing. The sea was at least a quarter of a mile from his home, so you may imagine our surprise when, after we had walked a third of this distance, he burst out with, "Och, the divil, 'tis the boat I'm afther for-gitting!" He was off home at a run, to reappear after a few minutes' absence with the boat—on his head!

It was fairly calm, so we could venture with our duck-like swimming coracle to trail our lines some little distance round the head of rocks that sheltered us from the Atlantic swell; and then, as if alarmed at our rashness, we would retreat before an incoming wave; to advance again when it had passed, hook a fish, and then come rushing back to shelter. What fish we should have had, thought we, could we have dared a little more. Still, the day was a pleasantly unique one and passingly successful. It made us long for a time amongst the monsters which, Carlin assured us, swarmed round the headlands.

A day in a larger boat was soon arranged for, and we were full of eagerness at the appointed hour as we hurried to the meeting-place. Carlin stood alone—no sign of crew, or boat, or place to hide them—yet a few steps brought us to a sloping crevice leading down to the water's edge and to

where, as strong as could be built with John Bull's money, as fresh as paint could make her, lay a boat, a "Congested District" boat, with four of its five joint-owners sitting at their oars, ready to back in and take aboard skipper Carlin and his two English fishers. I have been on very fine vessels, but this was the first occasion in my life on which I felt so overpowered that I lost my own identity, and had to ask myself who I really was. This grand, perfectly-equipped boat, its four mighty far-stretching blue oars; these five well-built, wiry fellows—what means it all? Am I a pirate bold or merely King Edward? Everything was too mighty, flashy and splendid for successful fishing on such a bright summer's day.

Owing to the use of our lightest sinkers and very long lines we now and then had interruptions to the jokes, songs and weird stories of our five Irish companions, who, though fathers of families almost as numerous as their captain's, were, after the first half-hour of stiffness, befitting the owners of such a craft, as full of fun as boys, and vied with each other in speech and gesture to infect us with their mad gladsomeness.

In a long day of merriment moods may change for a period; no one knows how. We only know that mirth has fled and that there has come an awesome, hushful silence to take its place. On this particular day the change was sudden. Seven happy faces were making noisy laughter; and then

a splash, and all was changed. Lips smacked together and laughter died. Up and out of the blue depths, within a foot of my top ring, a face had appeared, which so startled me with its human expression and the "phew" of its nostrils that I felt for one acute instant that someone was overboard. When I had quite recovered my equanimity I exclaimed: "What do you think of that?" To my great surprise no one answered me; each seemed to prefer that some one of the others should speak. After a painful pause I heard what was little more than a whisper from bow-oar, "May the divil put horns on the ghost!" Then I guessed that the appearance of the seal had stirred to activity a painful superstition.

Of their superstitions the Irish generally prefer not to talk. Sometimes I have drawn them out, but then they have relieved themselves of responsibility by attributing the faith to the people of some other district. In this case I was told that the Tory Island people believe that when wicked old women die, after doing so much mischief in this world as to prevent their entrance into Heaven, they are doomed to be for ever imprisoned in a seal with big, staring, tearful eyes such as had just now appeared. The rowers' heads were inclined at different angles so as to avoid being deprived, by the head in front, of a look at the expression on my face. I have learned that nothing begets confidence so quickly as sympathy. I therefore

looked sympathetic—no great effort for Devon blood cradled in the midst of wizards, ghosts, witches and pixies, where serving-maids and workmen have weird imaginations that are everlastingly cropping up to frighten youth and, frequently, themselves.

My earnest listening attitude succeeded in setting another tongue in motion which told that so great was their terror of seals that they would open their fish-filled nets rather than hurt or anger one. In return I told them that there was nothing wonderful in the belief of the Tory Islanders, but, on the contrary, it was in accordance with the faith of every people, no matter where they dwelt; the difference being that seals have been chosen for the restless Irish soul; while on the Bosphorus the Turks have their wonderful never-resting birds —*les âmes damnées*—for the souls of those shut out from Paradise. In many shapes and forms, from the hares on land to seals in the sea and birds in the air, doomed spirits have to make their ceaseless pilgrimage. Other countries have their banshees, their leprechauns, and their ill-favoured old women with power of evil in their eye who can do great harm, and wizards, too, with hair that has never been trimmed, who, when propitiated, can undo the started harm. "The same is thrue or you, sorr, and no doubt it's yerself that will be telling us what'll be plazing the wizard to help in sich times." "Hullo, that's a good

one tugging! Now, when I have landed this fish I will tell you a story that has happened in my lifetime, and which I know to be true."

At this particular moment we were rounding a rock almost covered with sea-fowl which stood their ground until we had almost passed them when, as if in premeditated concert, the gulls rose with a scream, and their black friends, the cormorants, dived away to the rear. It turned out that the tugging was caused by one of the diving cormorants which had become entangled in my line. We pinioned its wings with a view to keeping it, but ultimately gave it liberty.

This incident was not allowed to free me from my promise, so in response to, "It's yerself, sorr, that'll be commencing the thrue story," I told them the following:—

"Mary C—— was, so it was said by many, ill-wished by a witch. Be that so or not, she slipped one day from her seat in school and hurt her hip so much that her leg was useless. The local doctor failing to do her any good other doctors were called in, and they also failed. No one could be found to help. Many gave advice whose remedies were vainly tried. Mrs. H——, the wife of a sea-captain, and aunt of the little maid, who was quite a strong-minded woman and had pooh-poohed witches and wizards when others spoke of them, dreamed that Jimmy Thomas, the wizard, could cure her niece. When she woke

the wizard's name was on her lips, and the dream came back to her with so much vividness and force that she could not shake it off. At last she hired a trap and drove all the way from home to ——, and, after putting up her horse, started to walk to a moor, some three miles off, to consult the aforesaid Jimmy Thomas. She had not gone more than half the distance when she saw a long-haired man coming towards her. Thinking it might be the wizard himself, she looked inquiringly at him as he seemed about to pass. Instead of passing he came to her and said, 'I be come to meet 'ee; you be Cappen H——'s wife. I knawed you'd be coming, and I've zaved 'ee a trudge. It's about a chield thee wants me.'

"The captain's wife, of strong will enough, had to confess afterwards that she was as a lump of clay in the presence of this man and his weird knowledge of what none could have known but herself. What she gave to the wizard she never would tell, but he gave her from his pocket a box of ointment and a bottle of coloured liquid and then advice as to their use.

"She further relates that when she was on the point of asking him if the patient would ever be well again, but had uttered no word, he said, 'You be a good woman, you be, and I'll tell 'ee what I knaw. The chield shall walk again; of that I'm sartin zure, and I knaw the day; and I'll tell 'ee

vurder; it'll be on a Vriday that they will zit her on the winder seat, and she'll jump off and run to meet her vather.'

"All this was fulfilled to the very letter, and the only regret is that the wizard's fee was not made greater so that he might have used his powers to straighten the hip, that she might have walked with the grace that Nature meant for her instead of haltingly; so that, when life's romance came to her, her answer was a 'No'; given, indeed, so hesitatingly that the hearer guessed her true reason, waited another twelve months, then asked again; only to receive the same reply.

"Mary C—— still lives, and makes hats and bonnets for a wide *clientèle*, and sometimes varies her labours at millinery by knitting stockings for nephews who love their aunt."

To give my listeners an idea of weird Jimmy Thomas I had put my rod across my knees, while I drew my fingers down the sides of my face to show that the wizard's hair half hid his eyes and came quite near his nose as an untidy woman's does. While doing this I nearly lost my rod. It was the closest shave possible. I got a grip of it after it was overboard just as it was going down, and, fortunately, I gripped the rod only, and so secured the big fish that so nearly got the rod. Of course, I presumed the tale was off, and that it was to be fish and fishing; but no—I had to complete it, and this started the talk afresh:—

"Shure and it's not aisy to be level with the loikes of him and his queer spache. It's single and not married English wizards 'll be," came from roguish, twinkling-eyed Tim More. "Why not married?" asked I. His reply was, "It's meself was thinking he would be unable to put his comedher on the colleens with talk like that."

I felt curious as to the meaning of this strange-sounding word "comedher," and was told by Tim, in answer to my questioning, "It's just whispering sweet words, with the sweet side of yer tongue, in the colleen's ear until they become so sweet to her that she is deaf and blind to other bhoys."

Tim was evidently romantically inclined, so I asked him the question that had long been itching on my tongue, "And what of your fairies?"

"Ach, it's fairies we have in plenty, and mighty powerful they be. Our leprechaun is the fairies' shoemaker and the guardian of untold hidden treasure, and can bring a power of luck to whom he will. It's O'Donnell here will tell you how powerful our fairies are."

After some pressing O'Donnell said, "Well, thin, whin I was over at Arranmore I saw an ould man who had been lost for nine days and nights, and who, after much searching for, was generally supposed to have fallen into the say. Early one morning, howiver, he appeared again, and quite willingly explained that he had been tricked by a fairy, and had been kept a prisoner

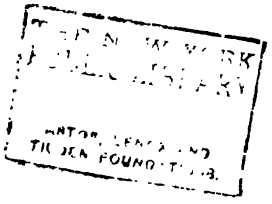


Photo by] [*W. K. Green*

"THERE CAME A BREEZE THAT MADE LITTLE WAVELETS"

in the fairies' castle, where he had been quite happy. While there he saw and talked with other men who were supposed to have been drowned, but that none of those to whom he spoke expressed any desire to leave the fairies, and that he was sorry he had done so." O'Donnell added, "I don't know what to think. The ould man himself believes he is telling the truth, and many others quite believe him; but there are gossoons who are ever asking him why he was kicked out of the fairies' castle?"

Across the glass-like surface of the sea, made glorious by the setting sun, there came a breeze that made little wavelets in response to which the fish began their evening meal, and we were too busy for further tales that day.

It was the usual custom at the hotel to give, after the serious courses of the dinner, an account of the day's doings. When my turn came, on this particular day, I had to tell them of the wonderful time spent in the wonderful boat, of the men who rowed her, and of Carlin the Captain.

After that the conversation was about gillies; how far necessary and the expense of them. Among the pleasant company was a sporting doctor; his son, a nice fellow; two still nicer daughters, and Mrs. Doctor. The doctor preached gillies indispensable, while his wife held that they were, after all, quite unnecessary, rather misleading in fact, and certainly over-expensive. I had the misfortune

to be appealed to for my opinion. Luckily I was able to take a neutral position by pleading that my little Pat was such a trifle of skin and bones that his cost per day must be too trifling to mention. But I was not to escape so easily. The doctor, quick-witted man, saw a chance of showing his wife what other fellows pay for gillies and how really economical he was. So, after a pause, he turned to me and said, "If it be a fair question, Mr. Geen, I should much like to know what this day has cost you in this matter of gillies?"

I could not fail to see the anticipation of triumph with which he looked over to his wife to see that she was ready to catch every shilling there should be in my answer.

My reply was a reminiscence recalled by the very words of the apologetic sentence with which he had started his appeal to me:—

"Well, doctor; many years since when I was in Sheffield I found that the secretary of the Sheffield Anglers' Association was also secretary of one of the Trade Unions. With a too great curiosity, I asked, 'If it be a fair question, Mr. Styring, what funds have your Union in hand?' His answer was, 'Nay, lad, nay! I would not tell my own lass that.'"

I was well rewarded for my neutrality in this battle royal. Mrs. Doctor beamed on me, and her daughters smiled towards my son, who was busy winking to Master Doctor. After that all eyes

were turned on the Doctor himself, who was laughing with great enjoyment at, what he was pleased to call, the Sheffielder's astuteness in not consulting his wife about money matters. Up to now, no doubt, the doctor had, as husbands do, told his wife everything, and perhaps it is a pity he ever heard of Styring.

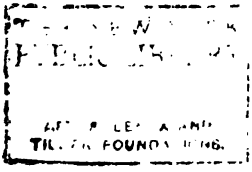
CHAPTER XII.

A REAL IRISH GENTLEMAN AND HIS LADY—MR. TIMOTHY BARLY AT HOME—AN EXCHANGE OF PIGS FOR CAPS.

SUNDAY is a rare day for visiting. It is a universal "At Home" with the people of Donegal after noon-time. To take full advantage of this custom, and to satisfy my craving for explorations on river-banks, I lunched early and sparingly on bread and cheese. The reason for this moderation will be understood when I say that my method of introducing myself to the tenants of the farms and cabins I desired to visit was, while unfailingly successful, so uniform that I was likely to be filled out with newly-drawn frothy bowls of milk.

The industries of the cabins in Donegal are carpets, tweed cloths, stockings, embroidered linen, and lace. I am now quite read up in the qualities of their tweeds, and I know the roots and herbs from which the dyes are taken, and, I may add, am the happy possessor of some pretty suit-lengths. I have some embroidered pillow-cases, side-slips and afternoon tea-cloths which those great authorities Messrs. Robinson and Cleaver would give me a profit on; so lovely is the open work, and so exact

Photo by] SUNDAY IN IRELAND. *W. K. Geen.*



the raised shamrock that no price will buy them of me.

Fashion is a factor in Irish life, the influence of which was sufficient with a girl at Ardara to cause her to attend school without her boots because the wearing of them would ensure remarks from her schoolfellows. In some parts it appears to be quite correct for gates and fences to be broken, for doors to be off their hinges, and for weeds to grow everywhere, even on cottage roofs. A spick-and-span homestead, where the cabin walls are as white as lime-wash can make them, and further distinguished by a covering of slates instead of straw, is rare and attracts the eye.

It was in such a home that I found Mr. and Mrs. Ryan and their widowed daughter. I had been told, "It's just a rale ould gintleman and lady you'll be finding within the same." It was the daughter who answered my knock and invited me inside. Mr. Ryan and his wife were sitting one on each side of the great open fireplace, and, judging by the fact that there was a stirring-spoon in her hand and on the fire a crock which gave forth savoury whiffs from time to time, as the lid was lifted by accumulated steam, she was preparing the midday meal. It was not so easy to discover why Ryan was there on such a hot day, but later on I knew that he was "coorting." Why not? He is an Irishman and only seventy-three. They rose simultaneously and said simultaneously, "Welcome to you, sorr."

When the daughter explained to them that I was thirsty they both spoke again, "What would the gintleman wish for most?" I replied, "Thank you, I should like some milk," and, after drinking it and again thanking them, I was about to leave them to their dinner-preparing and love-making. But I was not to go until much had been said about Ireland and its needs.

Not altogether dissociating himself from his neighbours Mr. Ryan remarked, "We are always waiting for Land Bills and Land Bills. It's lead the same are putting in our brogues. Who amongst the mighty spakers can give us back the hours of sunshine we have lost in blathering? How shall it help us if we get the land entoirely if we are too long lazily waiting for the same?" I ventured to ask this intelligent representative of the largest class, the small farmer, if, in his opinion, laws could be better made in Dublin? The old gentleman's eyes flashed at me, and, fearing I had made a mistake, I was quick to hold up my hand before he could answer, and then I assured him I knew nothing of politics, being only a countryman and a fisherman longing to see the country look lovely and prosperous, and therefore he need only forget my question.

His answer came in a raised, excited tone that caused me to look for explanation in the wife's face; but her eyes were fixed on her husband and, as he spoke, her pride was evidently very great.

"It's not forgetting the question we can be. It will be a great day for many of us when the powerful spakers permit us to do that same. May we be presarved from getting all we ask."

In response to this the old lady with uplifted finger said, "The same is true for them."

Much else was said by the old folks, but no words came that plainly approved or condemned; but the following may be taken as giving the impression I brought away with me:—

> "And we still might get on without doctors,
> If they'd let the ould island alone;
> And if purple-men, priests and tithe-proctors
> Were crammed down the great gun of Athlone."

Over and above and beyond any impression of mine was the pleasure of witnessing the anxiety and hope of the one that the words falling from the lips of the other should be to the purpose, and the nod and smile of encouragement which they gave each other in turn, and the pleased flush it called up, showed that such approval was to them what the applause of a multitude is to a public speaker. During the long conversation I had opportunities of taking note of my surroundings. The light of the blazing turf fire was given back in ruddy reflections from the bright plates that were ranged upon the well-scoured dresser in gradual order from the smallest plate to the largest dish. The table was as white as scouring could make it, and everything was equally clean and in its place. In the far

corner were sacks of meal, the narrow circles of white round their base proclaiming their contents. In the firelight and amidst the reflections that came back from numberless reflectors, were the old couple's happy faces. The lady's age I had to guess; but no matter, of a certainty they are lovers still.

Mr. Ryan's opinion may impress some, but is it not a fact that Ireland had many grievances of long standing which sorely needed the agitator's agitation? I heard a much-respected English M.P. tell a deputation to "Agitate, agitate, agitate." Their grievance was not so very great, but they agitated and got their way. Animals that make the most noise when they are in trouble get relief the soonest. A poor sheep may hang by its wool in a thorny thicket until it rots, while the noisy pig will get immediate attention. When a man has acquired all he needs he is apt to get quickly out of patience with tales of woe; he is full, so let there be no more discordant voices.

Agitation has done much for Ireland, so much indeed that every Englishman should be grateful that at last there is a prospect of the agitators—many a noble man amongst them—losing their occupation, for the best of all reasons, they will have finished their work as near as may be.

It was by the purchase of hosiery that I satisfied myself I had paid for the bowl of milk which was given me at Mr. Timothy Sarly's cabin. The Irish

re generosity itself, and you may not offer them ayment for that which will quench a wayfarer's hirst. It was Mr. Sarly himself who invited me a, and I fear I must have kept him from some Catholic observance, as he was dressed in his best and was crowned with a tall silk hat. I had always hought that this headgear needed dressing up to; t is associated in my mind with buttoned frock-coats; yet one glance showed me that a tall, hand-some, bright, hazel-eyed picture of indolence, like Tim Sarly, may wear it at all times and with any-thing that was ever stitched together. I never could learn how to put one on, and seldom tried; but when I did, mother, wife, or daughter had to alter its position. It seems to me to want a lot of doing, yet a real Pat can do it every time and look the roguish gentleman he is; no matter that the patch on the knee of his trousers is not quite the same colour as the garment itself.

I told Sarly that I was a countryman, and not a lover of towns. He sympathetically replied: "Shure, and no wonder; it's meself that's always the worse for a visit to them."

We threaded our way—we had on our Sunday brogues—between the dirty strong-smelling pools that occupied three-fourths of the yard, pools that were constantly stirred by pigs, fowls, geese, and ducks, to where a sight of the grass could be had.

The fact of there being a gate to protect the little meadow, and Pat's ready acceptance of it as

a resting-place for both his elbows, while he rubbed his chin and looked important, as if calculating the heaps of money the hay would bring, gave me sufficient confidence, in spite of past experiences, to rest my right foot on the second bar. The gate fell forward and my leg with it, so that my seat almost touched the ground, while my left leg was painfully stretched backward. Fortunately, the farmer was in the meantime making a clutch at my coat. This saved me, but he lost his hold and his balance, had to take a falling step forward, tripped amongst the bars and had a fall. We smiled at each other while he smoothed the nap of the family relic which he placed on quite another part of his head from that which it had occupied before. Then his smile changed to a severe frown while he explained that the accident was the fault of Garrotty, the smith, who had promised him nails when the field was first "laid up." "A murtherin villain, bad luck to him, and divil a pity. It's the back of me hand he'll get for the rest of me life." There was a sudden stop to his good wishes for the poor smith. and, after scratching his head, which appears to be a much approved method for clearing Irish brains, he added, "It's meself that's shure it was Garrotty, the divil take him, that I had the spaking to."

I was asking him if his grass was not a little over-ripe just as he and his gate went over, and, as I feel interested in over-ripe grass, I repeated my question. "Shure and it's meself that would

be busy a week since, but me naybur is himself using the scythe. Faix, it's buying one I'll be anyhow, and then I'll be disappinting the spalpeen that lint it to me—and small blame to me either!"

A noise of children driving pigs caused us to turn round to see a game of cross-purposes in the potato patch, out of which the grunters, after much huishing, are driven, only to be lost again among the big cabbages of the next plot. It dawned on Pat that reinforcements were needed if the animals were to be housed, so he whistled his dog, which, coming and seeing the seriousness of affairs, made his best noise. I joined the beaters and, as everybody was huishing, I said "Huish!" to the curly tails as they bobbed up here and there above the greens. I suppose there was not enough go in my "Huish!" for, instead of going, the pigs came, my way; down the very trench, indeed, in which I stood. It was Mr. Tim Sarly himself that laughed more loudly than the boys; yet, when I got up, every one looked quite serious, seemed sorry and said they were.

We, I say "we" with little pride, got them into the sty at last and the biggest of the little Sarlys held the gap and cried, "Arrah, be aisy, where's the door at all?" This was fished out from one of the miniature loughs of liquid manure, and placed against the opening. It was put wrong side out so that the ledges should be a support for the wooden prop that was to hold it in its place

until the pigs were rested and hungry again when, no doubt, the little comedy (minus my misfortune) would be played again.

It was Sarly himself who, looking at my clothes, tendered advice that might have been useful had it been offered sooner. "It's aisy you must be, and shure you must stand where the pigs themselves can see yer honor's detarmination. May I make bould to ask yer honour to walk in and tak a sate, and it's some of the dirt I'll be taking from ye."

Mr. Sarly, outdoors, was quite an important fellow, yet, no sooner inside his cabin than he swelled out and up considerably. "Mabby, set a chair for the gintleman. Tim, is that a pathern of yer manners to the gintleman that gave ye the fish? Quiet the child, will ye," and then, turning to Mrs. Sarly with a slight bend of the upper part of his great structure and with one arm akimbo—the hand of which held the great hat—and with his other arm stretched towards me, he said, "Shure, thin, this is the gintleman that'll be killing all the fish in Donegal before he'll lave it at all, and it's by the same token that Tim brought us two of thim."

The little Sarlys were everywhere in general, and particularly so over and about their tall, handsome mother. She was so cumbered with them that I offered her my hand quickly, fearing she might attempt some grand curtsy to match the manners of her husband.

It was evident that knitting, poultry and eggs brought in too little for anything beyond the plainest and poorest of clothes—much of which needed mending—and that it would be a blessing to the mother and children if Pat, the husband and father, would forget the past, give over dreams of the future, buy the scythe and cut the grass.

Amongst all this rugged life, bustle and confusion, and in spite of it all, I saw a look from the wife straight to the husband's eyes; and the answer they gave back plainly told that the great twin Irish gems, mutual faith and love, were there.

Having Mr. Sarly's pigs in mind I suggested to him that he might make a better profit by selling them direct to large consumers, thus dispensing with the middleman. To this he replied, "Divil a squeak of money have I as yet for the pig I sent to Dublin."

It is said there is comfort to be gained from listening to another's parallel woes, so I attempted to solace him by telling him that my father was almost as unlucky with a pig as he had been. Sarly's curiosity was immediately aroused, and I had to give him these particulars:—

"My father had a very old friend who had married a Scotch lady, and they settled in London. He came to Devonshire to see my father about nine years after I made my first appearance. My father's friend was the biggest man I had ever seen, and I thought him as clever as he was big. His

play-acting in our barn, where he showed us how Shakespeare was, and should be, acted, kept every boy's mouth widely open. We wondered how he could be spared from London town and thought of the grand reception he would get on his return. Unfortunately, his parents, unmindful of his great talents, had put him in a business that did not suit him and he lost his fortune. Soon afterwards, in response to a letter from London, a pig was killed and sent him, and when the hamper came back I saw it opened. Just inside the cover there was a picture plate of a boy of about my own age, dressed in such a splendid Highland costume that I then and there longed to be dressed as he was. Carefully, and all too slowly, the next covering was taken off, and there came to view a layer of Glengarry caps, and under those another layer of Glengarry caps, and then the white cloths the pork had been wrapped in. On the surface, Mr. Sarly, this would appear, to mere men, an unprofitable exchange of pig for caps; but we boys recognised the cloth. It was the great actor's trousers, the very garment he wore when acting in our barn, that had been cut up to make those caps."

CHAPTER XIII.

POACHING IN IRELAND—MAUM MOUNTAIN—PORT NOO—BRITISH SEA ANGLERS' SOCIETY.

PATRICK EARLY, my gillie while at Ardara, is a sensitive exponent of the overwhelming love of sport so deeply embedded in the Irish people. Give him a rod, and, if the capture of fish be within the bounds of possibility, he will become utterly unmindful of every obligation other than the matter in hand. Such is the inheritance of the stock from which he springs. His father, who gave me flies of his own making that would have been a credit to the cleverest, is the keenest of the keen, and told me with terse vigour of feats in piscatorial skill that stood to the credit of his grandsire.

Irishmen, almost to a man, are sportsmen, but, unfortunately, it must be added that not unfrequently their ideas of sport run contrary to present-day notions.

In the years that are sped their forefathers ran their gait unfettered by keepers or laws of preservation, and each generation knew the neighbouring stream and the habits of its fish. They

knew almost to a day, and they know now in many places, and make cruel use of their knowledge, when the deep lakes below will send up their shoals of ripe fish, and the spots, to a yard, which they will occupy. They have learnt every lesson in the craft that is necessary to aid them in taking wholesale what they desire.

I have given this matter of poaching some attention during each of my visits to Ireland, and, though I have not at all times been able to extract much definite information on the subject from those whose lives are spent on the banks of rivers, I have learnt, I believe, to properly interpret such scraps as they have let fall in moments of pressure or in times of heated promulgation of the faith, which is rooted in them, that they have right on their side.

Nothing that can be said is likely to convince the Irish people that this right is not one of the few things left to them. This universal feeling is given expression to in the few words taken out of a letter from Mr. J. Boyle, the Teelin schoolmaster:

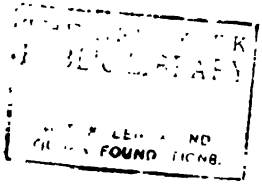
"I have heard my father speak and I have read my country's history, and I know I have the right to fish and shoot when and where I like."

I am not sure that his sentiments would not be mine were I an Irishman. I feel almost sure they would.

To ask men into whose daily life religion is

Photo by] [*W. K. Geen.*

THE TEELIN SCHOOLMASTER.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closely intermingled to forego immemorial rights, or customs, call them which you will, that enable them to comply with an ordinance of their Church, is asking much.

It took my countrymen of Devon, ministers and magistrates included (although French brandy is not so essential to a cleanly life as fish on Fridays to good Catholics), a lengthened time to learn that smuggling was wrong, and it would have taken longer had dealings in contraband goods remained more profitable than preaching the gospel and dispensing justice.

If the practice of unfair fishing was given up, a hundred times the value of what they now get would soon come to them from the multitude of fishers who would visit their lovely country, the majority of whom would be content had they visible assurance when there that the rivers and lakes were fairly stocked.

In many districts this is already fully realised, and fruitful efforts are being made, not only to coerce, but also to persuade; and many a one-time poacher is now either a gillie or a watcher, understanding that their old course was less profitable to them than the giving of pleasure to men who are pleased to pay for sport many times the value of the fish or game bagged.

While fishing at Carrick I had speech with watchers and keepers, and occasionally caught sight of a constabulary uniform that faced riverwards

during its perambulations on the adjacent road, which gave proof that at Carrick the safe-guarders of the fish had the upper hand. I spoke on this subject to Mr. Walker and he delivered himself confidently of the opinion that since the gang had been dispersed, which seven years before used to net a particular round hole at the Falls, no poaching had been done. I had seen the Falls and, thinking that the hole referred to was a most extraordinary spot for netting to take place, I inquired as to the sort of net that could possibly be made for the purpose. He described to me a very ingenious article which had been captured from the aforesaid gang.

On the very next day it was my turn to fish the stretch of water which includes these Falls, and, as I was returning up-stream from my first effort there, I made a short cut which took me out of the beaten track, and I found myself faced by an iris and bracken-grown ditch which I had to follow to find a place for crossing. Immediately in front of me, on the opposite side of the ditch, was a cabin, with two men at its door obviously watching my movements; but, as they made no offer of guidance, I proceeded on, without a falter, to find the way over. This I soon came to, but not before I had seen, hidden away in the ditch, the ghost of the net that my landlord had seen destroyed seven years before.

That night Sir James Musgrave's head-keeper,

his son and others, watched until midnight, but to no purpose. It was then determined that the son should crawl to the ditch and see if there really was a net. Had I faltered when I caught sight of it, or had I not returned to my fishing in an ordinary manner, the owners of the net would have removed it, and I should have been told I had been mistaken, as I have been told more than once before. The watching continued for some two hours longer, and, as those watched for did not put in an appearance, the net was taken away.

It has sometimes appeared to me to be the primary and most important duty of a preservation society to disprove the correctness of information supplied to them. This was once beautifully and most conclusively done for me on the Thames, but I had the consolation of reading, a few weeks afterwards, that the men had been captured and their nets destroyed. This little eccentricity would be a poor excuse for not subscribing to them. We must never forget that the work of preservation is, to a great extent, done by men whose time is valuable, without fee or reward, so we must overlook any little failing, and give our guineas ungrudgingly.

Before leaving Ardara I must tell of a nice day's sport we had in Lough Nalughraman, about five miles from Ardara.

It is very high up on Maum Mountain, where

we found the air so invigorating that our feet trod with a lightness that made it difficult to refrain from skipping and jumping for the joy of it. The views from the summit are grand indeed, and those who, while fishing this lake or viewing the surrounding scenery, do not see how beautiful the world is, may seek a long time for a tonic so likely to move the scales from their eyes as Maum Mountain.

On our way back we came to the Maghera Caves, but we only spared time to inspect the largest of them as we were anxious to try the Maghera Falls, where fish of considerable size are often taken.

We added but few to our store, but this slight disappointment detracted little from the enjoyment of our day's outing.

The climbing had brought a pleasant sense of fatigue so I retired early that night, tumbled into bed, shut my eyes and slept, slept the longest, shortest sleep since boyhood. It appeared to last but moments before there came a knocking, and a voice said, "Hot water, sir." I listened and there was another knock, and the same voice said, "Hot water, sir." Yet once again I heard the knock and voice, but seemingly from such a mighty distance that I thought I dreamt.

After that I caught a huge fish on Maum Mountain which I was hiding in the Maghera Cave, when again I heard a knocking, much louder

than before, and a high-pitched voice said, "The gentlemen have nearly finished breakfast, sir."

And so I am late for breakfast; but not on a fishing morning. That, I think, has never happened to me yet, though I cannot define how Nature knew that this was the day when we were to move from Ardara, and that the moving was fixed for ten o'clock.

Good-byes have been said, and we are on the car, with chatty Johnny McNelis as driver, so farewell to Ardara.

Our next stay was to have been at O'Donnell's Hotel, Glenties, but we found on our arrival there that sunshiny days, so pleasant on cars or mountain lakes, had so shrunk the rivers that fishing would have been profitless; so we diplomatically kept the luggage on the car, stabled and fed the horse and ordered lunch, prepared to journey on to where the information that we might gather meanwhile should point.

Port Noo, as we soon found out, has many brown trout lakes and a rocky coast, and, quite close by, an excellent hotel managed by Mrs. Cannon. We were soon off to this land of promise.

Glenties is a terminus of the Donegal Highland Railway, and is the easiest route to Ardara. It is situated at the head of two well-wooded glens, the property of the Marquis of Conyngham, and, as the fishing on the best salmon pools is reserved,

permission must be obtained from the estate office before proceeding to fish them. From Glenties to Port Noo the drive proved most interesting and enjoyable.

At Maas we came in sight of the Atlantic, and at Narin, which is close to Port Noo, we were much surprised to see quite a number of people bathing from the sands, which extend for miles. This sight made me doubtful of getting accommodation at Mrs. Cannon's, but, fortunately, she was able to give us nice rooms and an excellent dinner.

We stayed only three days, two fishing the lakes and one on the sea. The sport with the trout was fairly good, and with the pollack, excellent.

The trout in Lough Doon appeared to be numerous though rather small, but, as they rose freely, we were able to select a number of quite fair size. The same may be said of Loughs Fad, Pound, and Summy, and report says that there are really good trout in more than one of these lakes.

Our pollack fishing was quite a slow affair at first. There was scarcely a breath of wind, and the sea was quite calm. After an hour or more of rowing over dark ground we came to Inishkeel Island, and, as we still remained fishless, I asked the men to cease from rowing; then, while the boat gently drifted, we peered down to see if fish

were there, and not one was visible. Even when the depth was such that we could easily make out the conformation of the rocks, with their beautiful and many-coloured coverings, fish-life took no part in those gorgeous gardens. This to the ordinary fisher would have been a settler, and he would have said or thought, 'I can believe my own eyes; there are no fish."

The practised pollack fisher who has often seen these sights on days like this knows that the change will come. He smokes his pipe, has waking dreams, tells tales, or lets his fancy go free to guess the size and number of the fishy monsters that are hidden beneath the long leaf pattern carpet of these sea hollows.

This perfect calm in air and sea, and the consequent lassitude of fish and fisher, is but a repetition of hot, calm days in other places that have been followed by wondrous evenings.

Just as the sun is lowering in the west these very spots may fairly boil with rising fish that will seize your bait almost before a yard of line has left your reel. And it may be you will not have to wait for evening. The change may come at midday or any other time. Let but the tide commence to flow, the waving green curtains and the deeper-down carpets will then be drawn aside, and wakeful life, motion and appetite will soon be everywhere, so that within an hour you may have a load of fish beyond your easy comprehension.

How many men I know have hastily condemned good fishings simply because sport did not come quickly! Faith and fine tackle are great aids to success. Never despair while on the sea, but wait patiently for the fish that will surely come.

It came to us, but not in such wondrous fashion as it sometimes does. We gathered fish, first slowly and of small size, then a little faster and of better size, and, as the sun sank lower, they came more quickly still, and of such weight as to require care and skill in handling.

Pollack were obviously planned by Nature for strength and speed. The suddenness with which they rush from great depths, seize their prey and dive back from whence they came, requires some experience to realise.

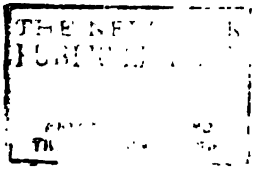
The strength of this fish, however much exhausted before brought to gaff, seems to come back when you attempt to release the hook that held him, and I have in consequence many scars out of which the barbs of flying hooks have come.

It is the danger of the second hook, which has damaged me so much, that has prevented my recommending to others the use of my favourite bait for large pollack, the "Natural Spin."

Hooks large, hard and thick that pliers can only snip the merest point off are nasty things to dig out of your fisherman's calf or finger, and it is almost as painful for him to do the like for you.

Messrs. Allcock I am pleased to say have

Photo by] "FIRST OF SMALL SIZE, THEN OF BETTER SIZE." [*W. K. Geen.*



greatly improved this bait by doing away with the second hook, and fixing a single one in such a manner that the bait itself becomes a handle to disengage it from the fish's jaws. I can now with confidence advise the use of it.

It may seem to the salmon angler that his fish can have no equal, but he may learn that, weight for weight, a pollack's sudden rush for shelter is a greater strain than that of a salmon's first run.

It is not uncommon to hear even the spring salmon fisher complain that he was unable to get a decent run out of his fish; you will never hear this against the pollack.

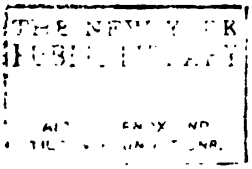
How fortunate for the men and youths who are being made fishers by "The British Sea Anglers' Society"—I would add to their title, "The Aid to Health Society"—that while the capture of a salmon may cost any sum between five pounds and three hundred, there is a gamer fish that literally swarms on all our coast lines wherever there are sunken rocks! Such fishing is unlimited and indisputably free; it is the poor man's birthright which no one's wealth can debar him from, and may more power be given to those who would aid him to its enjoyment.

I often meet some of the workers of this Society, and am much impressed by the earnestness of their faith that sea-fishing is good in countless ways. A prominent member, Mr. P——, might have been seen, a short time since, in Cheapside trying to

make a convert. He then and there almost persuaded me to join them. So eloquent was he about the sea, that I momentarily expected him to break out with :—

"Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
Her home is on the deep."

NEW "NATURAL SPIN."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CHAPTER XIV.

BIRDS'-NESTING—A COUNTRY SUPERSTITION—BURTON PORT.

It would have been an easy journey by boat from Port Noo to Burton Port had we known that it was there we should take our next sleep, but we had no regrets that the journey by road was chosen as we found the drive of twenty-one miles the most charming of all our many charming drives.

Mr. Johnny McNelis had pressed me to wire him that he might take us the next stage on our journey, and I should have wished to do so, but Ardara was too far off. When I told him this he replied he would like to drive us round the coast to Kingstown, put up his horse and himself, and wait there while we took a trip to London, had a sight of our home, visited a bank and came back again.

Our road was mostly along the deeply-indented coast, but now and then we ascended steep hills and made short cuts over breezy wastes, dotted with granite boulders, bogs and lakes, over roads that wound serpent-like between hills that had cabins here and there upon their sides. Around the cabins were patches of potatoes, oats and grass. which showed how the owners of them had

struggled with the rough moor and its sodden soil. Then came miles of bog and peat that had deep cuttings with juicy brown water in their trenches, and blackened stumps of forest trees that kindly Time had buried out of sight.

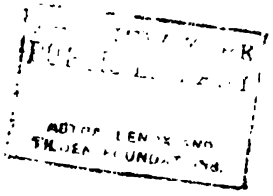
Then down again almost to sea level, where in many a sheltered nook vine-like brambles, laden with luscious fruit, and tall bracken, the points of their upper leaves still uncoiled and looking like innumerable nut-brown caterpillars that had climbed to heights where they could best be seen, joined with gaily-decked foxgloves to clothe and beautify the high sea wall.

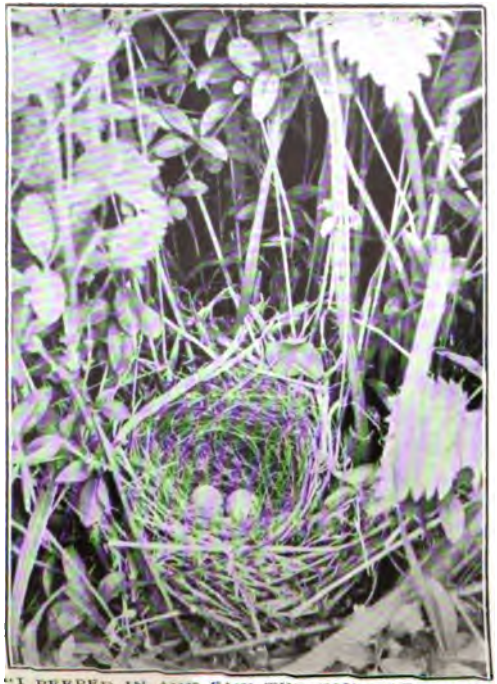
Out and beyond were protecting trees, dwarfed and bent inwards by western winds, while on the road's other side, in firmer soil, the mountain-ash in all its glory gave shade to the refreshing tints of beautiful ferns and pretty fluttering grasses.

Never have I seen a spot that so vividly recalled my native county, and never since I was a boy have I so filled myself with blackberries or felt so inclined to loiter.

To reach the berries we had at times to lean our bodies so near to balancing on the wall that to prevent toppling over we held each other's heels. Once I playfully relaxed my hold the weeniest bit and there came apparently from a long way down, "Hold on there, dad."

The nests we saw fixed in the forked branches against the wall would have made my heart go





"I PEEPED IN AND SAW THE FAMILIAR EGGS"

"THE POINTING OF THE CAMERA FRIGHTENED

thump, thump in my birds'-nesting days, but now I looked down on the beaded, pleading eye of a blackbird as she sat hoping that I might not disturb her, and regretted that the pointing of the camera frightened her off.

Two wrens were making believe that the shelter of the overhanging bank had no attractions for them, and that their presence was quite casual, but I could see from where I sat the little round nest, with its tiny peephole, which fingers may not touch until you know the coveted eggs are there or these little creatures will go elsewhere and build again.

A robin, perched on a branch above our heads with nesting in his beak, was waiting patiently for our going, while his mate flitted to and fro anxiously showing us how easy motion was, but we sat on pretending not to watch, and saw the loaded bird visit a hole in the high bank, and when it came out again its beak was empty.

On a gate close by a cow had comforted her tickling side and left much hair, and it was from this great store the robins lined their nest. Instinctively I took bearings of their home so as to pay a visit when the eggs were there.

"Chit, chit, chit, doant stew" in a plaintive key kept my years away, and I was still a boy, and was off to find the tell-tale straw that always hangs from the yellow-hammer's window, but when I peeped in and saw the familiar eggs, I suddenly remembered

that many years had flown since I collected eggs in the tallet of an outhouse.

I strolled back and perched upon the wall again, and was beginning to tell my companion how much his grandmother disapproved of birds' eggs being in her house, when a pull at my arm dislodged me. My son has a trick that grows on him of making me move forward when I am thinking back.

I am a little obstinate when so enchanted, and I insisted on another peep through the semi-tropical foliage at the rolling waves and wondrous rocks.

The sniffs of ozone that filtered through the tangled maze of sweet smelling herbs and flowers, and the grateful shade from the hot sun, brought unconscious happiness to me. Turn where I would in this lovely spot there was a fresh delight that I could not leave so quickly.

"Just a moment, Kirk. See how Nature grows in beauty. It was beautiful when you scampered in the meadows and gathered your mother flowers; it is more beautiful now when you hunt for pretty spots to take pictures of, and I hope it will grow still more beautiful to you from year to year as it has with me.

"Listen to the little noises that haunt such spots as these. Shut your eyes and listen how they grow and grow in volume and how musical they are and what a grand harmony they make. Listen, listen, it's the lark's turn now to give a solo.

How her little big voice drowns all else, excepting only the approving cooing of the doves!"

Again I was being pulled away, as I have seen kind friends pulling other men from great temptation, when the woodpecker's tap, tap, tap, made me look round once more.

Who can be sure that such sounds in such a spot, when you are attuned for fancies, are not made by Leprechaun, the fairies' shoemaker and treasure keeper?

"In a shady nook, one moonlight night,
A Leprechaun I spied;
With scarlet cap and coat of green,
A cruiskeen by his side.
'Twas tick, tack, tick, his hammer went,
Upon a weeny shoe;
And I laughed to think of his purse of gold;
But the fairy was laughing too!"

Who is not superstitious? If there is one amongst my readers, let him beware, for I can make him so in a line or two.

It's a pretty fine compliment, I own, to pay a town-bred man to say that by the mere reading of a country superstition it will so lay hold of him that he can never shake it off.

This is for the one man amongst ten thousand, if there be one, who has no superstitions. The first time he ventures forth into the green fields, after reading this, he may see a magpie, and it will be a great relief to him if he sees a second one with it. Should he not, let him beware what path he

takes; and it behoves him to be most circumspect in all his doings on that day, for misfortune is at his heels, waiting to pounce.

You may be as indignant as you like, but, for the remainder of your life, as sure as you see a magpie you will be pleased to see her mate. There can be no truer omen of misfortune than the old-maid magpie.

I think it only kind to anticipate a difficulty that is sure to be yours in days to come. How far behind may the second bird be, and yet pair with the first? "Almost any distance," is the comforting answer, but, remember this, he must be hurrying after his old "dummon."

We caught no glimpse of fairies in the fairy-dell but, on ascending the next hill for another cut off of jutting land, we saw what is of some importance in Ireland and of more material substance—pigs.

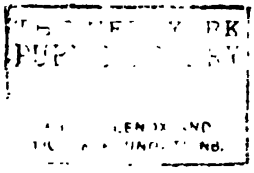
The sight of a cabin, near the road, told us how thirsty we were, and we halted.

Of course the pig, with its ruling passion to see and be seen, was the animal to grunt a welcome. Irish pigs are most sociable, but it was a cow we desired a sight of. After a little delay we got a nice bowl of milk and, as it was warm, the cow must have been near at hand.

The absence of the woman who went to fetch the milk for us gave the pigs, which had followed us to just within the door, an opportunity of which they immediately availed themselves to forage.

hoto by] [W. K. Green.

A CABIN NEAR THE ROAD.



They came first along the front of where we were seated and, as they passed, they raised the sides of their faces nearest us, gave satisfied grunts, flopped an ear each and then made for a basket, the contents of which they were soon crunching in their long jaws. I made an attempt to disturb them, but my huish! and the flicks of my hand kerchief seemed to add zest to their determination to finish off the juicy tubers before the owner returned.

I am always fearfully unlucky in my dealings with pigs, but I felt myself somewhat in charge and responsible for damages, so I had to use more forcible persuasion. I pushed them with my foot, and as this, too, seemed to please them rather than otherwise, I looked round me for a weapon and spied a broom with which I think, had I been sure the old lady would not have caught me at it and been offended at my violence on her favourites, I would have driven them off. Fortunately, she just then appeared on the scene and her presence caused the enemy to retire.

I had reason to be glad that I had been relieved of the momentous decision of sacrificing the potatoes or belabouring the pigs. I was soon to learn that these animals were the centre of affections in no way short of the love the Arabs have for their horses. She had a number of apologies for their behaviour, and she finished up with, "Small blame to the crathurs for getting a taste of the new

phaties, it would be dhry in the mouth they'd be as yer honors were this same day."

The new iron bridge over the Gweebara gave us a capital view of a long stretch of this splendid salmon river, the best probably in all Donegal, but the privilege to fish it is most difficult to procure. When on the other side of this bridge you are encircled with rivers and lakes almost all of which are fishable from Dungloe. Indeed there is no place in all Ireland, so far as I know, where there is such a variety of fishing to be had. Fintown on the Donegal railway is the nearest station.

We were most unfortunate in finding the hotels full at Dungloe, but we were given a nice lunch and pressed to come back in a week, when rooms could be had and fishing in over 100 lakes and on a salmon river that has no nets at its mouth and from which fish have been taken up to 25 lb., and sea-trout up to 7 lb.

Lunch over we had to determine our next move and decided on Burton Port, where we had a splendid time so far as sport on the sea was concerned, comfortable quarters, good attention and capital food.

Burton Port is the terminus of the Donegal Light Railway, built by the Government and handed over to the Letterkenny Railway Company, who work it, and it is therefore in direct communication with Londonderry, and just twenty hours from Euston.

Mr. O'Donnell has built a most comfortable hotel, and the chief maid, Bridget, of whom I have spoken as being appreciative of the trouble saved her by getting the boatmen to clean the pollack, may be trusted to see that your stay is a pleasant one.

The port is capitally situated for the sea fisher as it is seldom during summer or autumn that Atlantic winds, no matter how roughly they may blow, can prevent his venturing in some direction in search of sport.

There was no limit to the fishing grounds, so each day we started on a different course to see new sights, to hear other tales from smooth-tongued Johnny, and to strew the boat with flopping fish.

Immediately in front are Rutland, Inishcoo and Eighter Islands, giving splendid shelter, with a narrow passage to the outer channel, which is in turn sheltered by Arranmore, the largest island off this part of Ireland. It has been purchased by the Congested District Board. These islands are a great centre of the fishing industry of Donegal which the Board has done so much to foster. A fleet of herring boats, many with Scotch masters, nets, curing houses, cooperage works, women curers from Aberdeen, and every other help that kindly thought and earnest endeavour could suggest, have been provided, with the result that Burton Port and the adjacent islands are fast assuming a pleasingly prosperous aspect.

How much the place had changed I was soon to learn, as amongst the guests at the hotel were a Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, from New York city. Mr. Rogers had left Arranmore as a young man, twenty-five years before, and now, while on a tour of Europe with quite a large party, he had stolen away with his wife to get a look at his old home. For many days he sat next me at table but I failed to start him on a talk. He looked an Irishman and I guessed, as he "guessed" and "calculated" when talking to his wife, that he had seen America. The man was troubled and his broad forehead showed it, so I tried the more to draw him out. At last I got it from him. What he came expecting to see and what he really saw caused such a jumble of all his notions that what he had framed to say was not appropriate. "I'll tell you plainly," said he. "I'm glad to get it out. I came expecting to find here the misery from which I fled and ready to curse your country, but now I guess I'll sell those curses cheap."

The hotel cannot possibly be spoken too highly of, and the proprietor will listen to your wishes and aid you to their fulfilment.

McCole and Johnny, with just the right sort of boat which they could sail or row as occasion offered, were at our disposal at the time appointed, and on the jetty stood our host to introduce us to them. Having told them what we most desired to catch we handed in our little rods, and I was

pleased to see the keen interest they took in the lines and baits attached. The fine single strand wire trace was fingered by McCole and shown to Johnny, who said something to his mate not quite intelligible to us, but its purport could be guessed quite easily, "the gear would quickly snap." A breeze filled the sail and we were once again listening to the music of the lapping wavelets on our bow.

The two miles that separate the mainland from Rutland Island were soon passed, and, while in the narrow passage that leads out to the wider channel which is sheltered from western winds by Arranmore, we, at the invitation of our boatmen, put out our baits. Quite quickly we were both engaged with heavy fish where the tide was running fast and we had some exciting fun before we got them near the boat, but the greatest fun was to steal glances at the watching faces of our boatmen who were most evidently expecting breakages.

Once through the passage I called a halt for conference as to our day's proceedings. We had a week to stay and desired to map it out as tides permitted. It would be a waste to go where the rush of waters would be so great as to prevent headway being made against it. Choose sheltered bays for when the tide flows or ebbs strongly and rocky points when the water slackens.

CHAPTER XV.

POLLACKING AT BURTON PORT—ROUGH ISLAND—A REGATTA AND ITS HORSE-RACE.

IT was just the day to work northward, so our sail was again set and we made for the sunken rock off Rough Island, which soon proved quite worthy of its great repute. The boatmen miscalculated its position by a trifle, and our baits, instead of searching its deep sides, were trailed across its crown, and we were soon fast in weeds that we could not move, so we had to break our lines. I think it wise to always make light of such accidents or your boatmen may, to prevent your displeasure, keep too far from weedy rocks, and then your chance of sport will be small. The fact of our being hung up showed that our boatmen were trying for the ideal which often allows little margin between a good day's sport and a perfect failure.

Two more rubber worms were taken from a well-filled box, which I was careful the men should see and so learn to know how small our loss was. Round we rowed, and, somewhere before the ring was made, we got a fish. Then round again and two more fish.

In the excitement it took some time to discover that all the fish came from the outer side that faced the tide. After this discovery we paid attention to that part only where the fish were gathered waiting for what the flow might bring.

When the first fish is fairly large and the captures get less and less in size leave that spot, no matter how fast they bite. Move on for fish worth taking.

Just in front of us were the cliffs which lead round to Bellachreesh Bay, so we kept our baits out as we should, in a stroke or two, have them where fish might be expected. Innumerable little tugs told that the fish were small, so we kept slowly on our course, which brought us to deeper and rougher water.

The motion of the Atlantic roll, as it took the island sideways, caused the boat to swing first inwards and upwards as if to mount the cliff, then outwards and downwards, in most disconcerting fashion, but two big fish—one a very big one—made us sit tight, fight, and forget all else. It is at times like these that you get full advantage of your short give-and-take rod. Anything more cumbersome, stiff, or lengthy would be in the way, and you would be in danger of a break; at any rate, the fish would have far too great an advantage for you to often get the mastery.

A 9 lb. fish in the slightest roll will test your skill and tackle, but the 13-pounder, shapely and

strong as any salmon, caused us a lengthy, excited struggle that left us in need of just a little pause. So we turned round a point, and found ourselves in a little bay that had a shelving landing-place, and there we lunched.

We had to leave the little bay, for in it we could find only soldier-pollack, which usually run very small and are not so good to eat.

When once outside we were again subjected to the peculiar swinging motion which we had found so troublesome, and again we had to tussle with two large fish which used their advantage of our sudden dropping into a deep trough and the consequent slacking of line to get amongst the weeds. Backing the boat was quite impossible, and we had to make a wide circuit to get back on them. Fortunately, we had lengthy lines which permitted this manœuvre or we should have had a second loss. As is generally the case the fish soon bolted from their cover when we pulled on them from the way by which they had entered.

At last the waves became so high that we had to give over fishing until we could find smoother water. This we got when we reached Bellachreesh Bay, where we took several fish, but too small to give much pleasure in their capture. So again we ventured forth, and we were no sooner round the point than we were again busy with two strong fish which, helped by the strange antics of our boat, gave us great fun.

Had the waves been just a little more moderate I really think we could have half-filled our boat. Frequently we had to give over fishing and use both hands to keep our balance. It is impossible to wish for better haunts for pollack than those we found all the way round to Torneady Point, and then again to the Lighthouse on Rinrawros Point.

The day had been, up to now, most pleasurable, the sun tempered by the breeze just to a heart's wish, but now there had come a little cloud which made me think of the distance we had to travel back. So the rods were put away, the bow turned, and the sail set for home.

The breeze soon freshened and the waves increased in height and aggressiveness, and broke with growing roar against the cliffs. Fortunately, it was a fair wind and we travelled homewards at almost racing speed, the boat rising and falling on the big rollers as if to tell us that such a sea was a mere trifle to a really good boat like her.

We were nearing home when the first lightning flash told that the storm gathering in our wake was overtaking us and about to break. A further warning was given by a long roll of thunder, which came in from sea and echoed among the rocks.

We gained the pier just as the rain commenced, and raced each other for the shelter of the hotel, which we reached with another coat of colour on

our bronzed faces and such rude appetites as made us, I feared, quite noticeable.

The storm raged during a considerable part of the night, but in the morning the air had cleared, and the sea, while still a little rough, looked very tempting ; so we were soon off with expectations of a lovely sail to the southern end of Arran Island.

The sea breeze which sped us on our way and fanned us so caressingly was delightful to well-breakfasted men, and we lolled back in our seats, stretched forth our legs and were happy.

The measured rise and fall and rhythm of waters invited laziness that was quite luxurious, and it was thus that we spent the first hour or more.

Just as you leave the Channel there is a very small island, and it was there we put a reef in the sail that we might go round it at the slackened pace necessary for successful fishing. We soon had fish, but they were too small to dwell upon, so the sail was given all its cloth again and we were off for the larger island that stood straight ahead, Inishkeeragh, and which, as it lay farther out at sea, seemed more likely to give us real sport. We were soon busy with such heavy ones that the sail had to give place to oars, so that we might keep near the fish and be able to quickly go forward or back as the case might demand.

Still farther south is another island, Illancrone, which provided fair sport.

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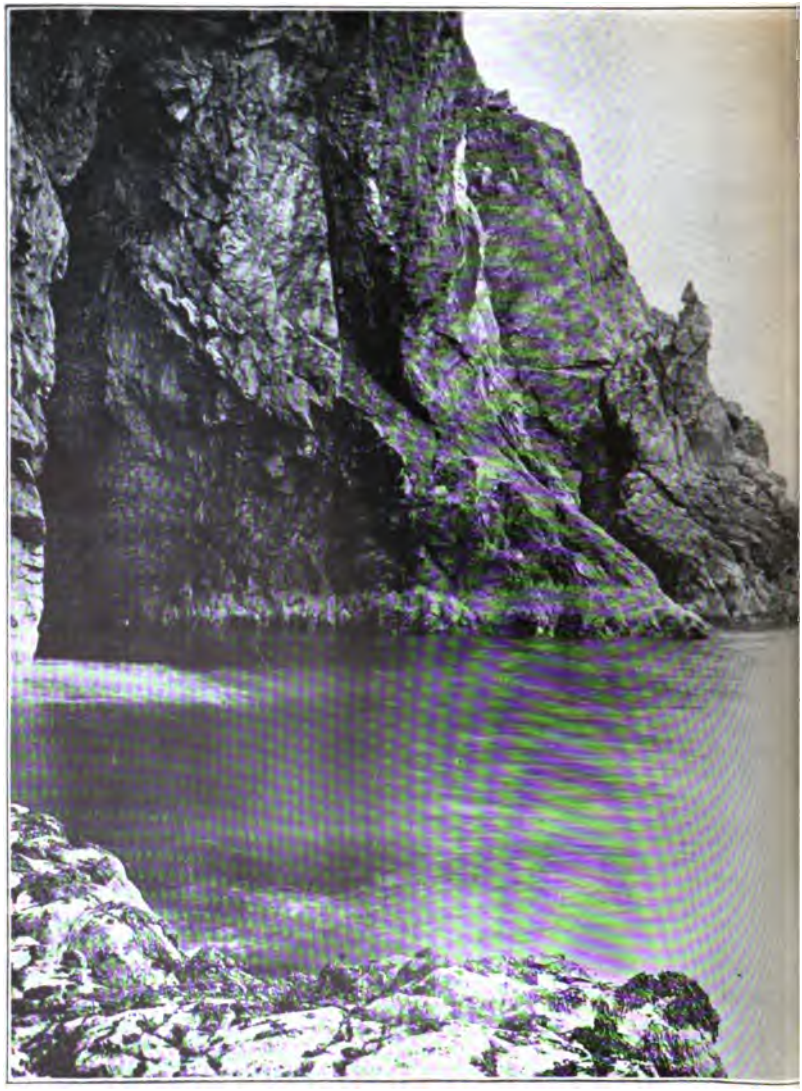

Photo by] "THE BREEZE HAD NOW DIED DOWN." [*W. K. Gee*

It was now near lunch time, and, as we saw no easy landing-place, we made for Arran and its high sheltering rocks.

The time had sped so swiftly that it appeared wonderful that such appetites could have come back to us. There was quite a liberal supply of food, but it disappeared all too quickly, and the eager second searching of the papers in the basket proved disappointing. Friends have told me not to smoke cigars when on or near the sea. I still do it. I am a splendid listener when the cigar is good and the tales that are told somewhere near the mark.

Johnny had been with the salmon-fishers in the earlier part of that season, and could tell us of the wondrous takes of fish they got, not in the usual way near the coast, but nine miles out at sea. Boats earned as much as £80 per week, so there was a rare good harvest.

The breeze had now died down, and the sun fell upon us quite scorchingly, so we shifted to a shady spot.

From salmon to seals is but a step, and John was soon telling us strange stories of these latter which showed that superstition regarding them is as rife here as on Tory Island.

In dark cavities the seals enjoy their wild solitude quite undisturbed, and will continue to do so, for no native dares forget the tales that have been handed down to him.

Johnny, backed up by McCole's approving

nods and smiles, told me about the man who had paid such a lengthened visit to a fairies' castle. He was much surprised at my knowing of it, and showed anxiety to learn who had told me. I fancy he was more fogged than ever when I told him I came from a country where fairies were quite plentiful and sometimes visible. The rings they made while dancing in our meadows and on our moor were worn quite bare with use. In the early morning music came through the mists from near the brook in the home meadow, just as the lark was rising, and tiny voices were singing:—

> "Fairy king attend and mark
> I do hear the morning lark."

The reality of Devon fairies sobered him, and he quite seriously told me that it was true about the old man on Arran Island being lost, and he supposed he must have been in the Fairies' Castle, or he could not have told the tale he did.

The days flew by at Burton Port, for, go where we would, sport was sure, and there were no anxieties about getting back; we had two strong men to row when the wind failed. There were no dull moments. McCole, of whom I have spoken but little, is a keen listener with a well-stored memory, loving a tale and most encouraging to the teller of it. Now and then he encouraged himself to let out quaint sayings that hinted at

strange faiths. "The lucky man's luck never deserts him. It's with him after death; no sooner is the daisy quilt over him than another is laid beside him to relieve him of his duty. Sure you'll be knowing that the last to be buried has to carry water to the thirsty souls in purgatory."

It is necessary to be most careful in receiving such talk as this or you close the lips that are speaking. I have found it answer to say, in sympathetic tone, "Is that so?"

Is it not extraordinary how fast time flies when we have all we need of health, food, and pleasure?

It was already our last day at Burton Port, and we were off to fish once more, with sufficient wind to give such speed as made with the swishing waves music which in its turn made everything seem joyful. I felt like giving voice to the song my heart was singing, but I feared the "Oh! please don't," so I turned my eyes to tuneful Johnny who will surely sing or, happy thought, whistle me the tunes he danced to at the ball he was so eager for last evening.

A few days' fishing together in a boat is sufficient for sympathy to grow keen between men with sporting instincts. There are no divided interests, no jealousies. United efforts are directed to common ends—to catch fish, be pleased, and be pleasing. The slightest change in tone of voice, in gesture, or in looks calls for notice and

explanation. What can Johnny's clouded brow and firmly-set mouth betoken? He is young, tall, slim, and fair to look upon, and at the last wedding the slipper came his way—a sure sign that the Destinies have his happiness next on their programme. What ails the lad then? Did his colleen tread upon his toe while dancing with some one else? Surely it can be nothing less than that. So I offer him consolation by singing:—

"Cheer up, Sam, don't let your spirits go down,
For there's many a gel,
As I know well,
A-waiting for you in the town."

He saw some humour in this, laughed and said:—"It's not girls, sir." "Then what on earth is it?" I replied, "Well, it's not earth at all, at all; it's just the regatta I was thinking your honour would be going to this day. There will be donkey-races and horse-races."

"Surely not on the sea, John?"

"On the say-shore, sir."

"Is that so?" was my quite-Irish inquiry, to which John gave the orthodox Irish reply, "It is."

"Port your helm, McCole, and make for Arranmore. I love regattas, and, if it plaise the pigs (this I had heard before I left the hotel that morning) I'll be picking the winning crew and be chinking money on our return." The troubled look on John's face instantly disappeared as he heard the order given, and his lips, which before

had been near to pouting, now shaped themselves to whistle. But whistling was too tame for the occasion, and he softly gave himself the first line of the song he had just heard:—"Cheer up, Sam, don't let your spirits go down." He remembered no more of the words, but he had plainly added that line to his musical *répertoire* as a tuneful luck-bringing snatch. Then, as he got calmer, he gave me an account of what was likely to be doing at the regatta, and who would be there. "What of the horse-race, John?" "Well, sir, they are saying that Adams, the coast-guardsman, has borrowed a real flier, and means to beat the dwarf who always wins the race, but I'm doubting if he'll be able to manage it."

Each and every adjacent island had sent competitors to Arranmore, and also little hosts to cheer them. The mainlanders were deeply interested; they had built boats which could not, they thought, be beaten. Arranmore had foregathered, in all its strength, to give smiling welcome to all and sundry; even the English strangers were fairly lifted out and given a friendly greeting. Good-natured laughter lasted all the day, and was ever ready to acclaim a friend's disaster, and the crowd, sportsmanlike, never failed to cheer a winner's skill, no matter where he hailed from.

The donkey-races and the extraordinary scenes attending them are as indelibly fixed in my memory as the coster's upset donkey-barrow and vegetables

are in his, and, like him, I can only scratch my head and say, "There are no words for it."

At last came the horse-race. Of course, there was no professional betting, but I found that the dwarf was again easy favourite. I supported the adventurous sailor on the chance of his proving a good dark horse. The course was to the flag-staff, round and back. There was no starting-gate, but the M.C., chief officer on the Arranmore naval station, soon had them going, and at once my navy blue shot ahead. But, alas! his steering became faulty, and, after going too much inland, he came round in front of his competitors with a list seawards and his craft was soon fetlock deep in water, which she scattered in the most playful manner until she espied one of the long succession of graceful foam-capped curves that was running in on the shelving sand, and then she stopped suddenly. This unseated Jack, who not altogether ungracefully fell over the horse's neck, slid down its forelegs, and sat in the surf. The handy man was not long taking his bearings, and when he discovered his horse was just where he had left it, as calmly waiting his pleasure as if it had been a drink he had got down for, he remounted and was just in time for a fine race with the returning dwarf for the winning-post. Jack's explanation to his questioning companions, given without a moment's hesitation, was, "Sure, and it was my backwash I was for giving them."

CHAPTER XVI.

HORN HEAD—ART AND LUCK—CHADDING AND SQUIDDING.

As we were saying good-bye and tendering our thanks to those who had helped to make our week at Burton Port a pleasant and successful one, some cards were given me which said, quite truthfully :—

"This splendid hotel is magnificently situated in the centre of a district that possesses the united attractions of mountain, lake and ocean. On one side are moor and mountain, on another the celebrated Hundred Lakes of Dungloe, unrivalled for fishing, and in front the Atlantic, with Arranmore, Rutland and several other islands in the near distance. Close to the pier, railway station and post office. Boating and bathing, shooting, and lake and sea-fishing.

"The combined air of mountain and sea makes the place excellent as a health-restoring resort. Twenty hours from Euston."

The weather being still fine, and the rivers low, we decided to make Dunfanaghy our next stopping-place, so as to try for pollack at Horn Head. We made the journey by the new light railway to Creeslough.

We regretted having to pass Crolly Bridge and its inviting river, from which friends of ours had got good sport a few days previously, while a sight of the Claudy River and Gweedore almost made us alter our fixed plans and give it just a two days' halt.

At times the engine gave noisy evidence of steep climbing which ended in our being lifted to great heights, whence we could view the country for many miles, yet, look where we would, we saw no signs of life other than the heather, which bloomed everywhere, a perfect wilderness of flower. Down these peaty, heather-scented hills there wound and tumbled a stream that made a silver streak as far as the eye could reach. Lacking in life, it all seemed unreal until, looking upwards to the heights, I spied a solitary fisherman. He looked so quaint and lonely on his high perch that had he had wings they would have seemed quite appropriate. Surely his friend, although invisible to us, must have been near; joys, such as his were, are only half enjoyed unless they find an echo in the joyous heart of some dear old chum.

While he had climbed slowly and with noisy efforts to giddy eminences we appeared to rush headlong down the deep incline; at any rate, we were soon at Creeslough, where quite another kind of scene awaited us.

There was a little crowd of people on the platform; some were dancing to the music of a con-

certina while others sang, and still others cried. The central figure was that of a young woman who stood by a box, with a bundle in her hand.

> "'Tis but a box of modest deal,
> Directed to no matter where:
> And on it is this mute appeal,
> 'With care.'"

There was much kissing, but the last kiss ended in a hug that might have lasted too long, so mother and daughter were torn apart and the young woman, her box and bundle, were put into the train.

Then the music ceased and all eyes were turned towards a woman, whose sobs seemed to come through the man's shoulder on which her head was resting. The man who held her there patted her lovingly; he could not speak.

The contrast of these two scenes moved me to thoughts that were not exhausted when we reached our destination.

The Stewart Arms at Dunfanaghy is very English, and similar, in every respect, to the country commercial we all know so well. We soon made ourselves at home there, and it took us little time to secure the services of boatmen who were eloquent about monster fish that on calm evenings made quite a commotion out Horn Head way.

No sooner were my ears open on the morrow of our arrival than in through the open window came the sound of gently-breaking waves that said "you

may hope to sail to-day." Sail we did, and in such a real sailing manner that the usual haste to have everything in readiness to commence to fish was quite forgotten for a space. No doubt the wish to ensure a sight of the wonders of Horn Head helped to keep in check our desire for sport.

Mile after mile of the waters of Sheephaven Bay sped past and, with each mile, our men's faces showed such pride that I wondered if it was of their boat, their sailing, or the wind, that they looked so proud. I rather think sailors are inclined, when land-lubbers are on board, to lay a little claim to the wind that blows and the waves that roll. It's a pleasing sight to see men proud of what they are doing, it's sure to be their very best, and it is all the more pleasing when you are participating in the fruits thereof.

We were soon at Horn Head with all its wonders near us, yet not too near to prevent our seeing them in all their grandeur.

My practical partner had, I suppose, quickly taken his impressions of the scenery, for, when I turned round to see what effect it was producing on him, I found him, with rod put together, stretching for the box of "Natural Spins."

"There's no doubt it is very grand, Dad, but I am for some of those big ones we've heard so much about."

With a last look at Horn Head I joined him, and our baits were soon being drawn along the sides

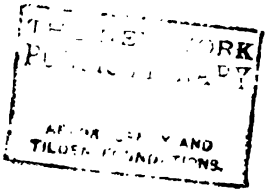
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Photo by] "A SORRY PICTURE." *[W. K. Geen.*

of cliffs, and over sunken rocks that had waves of churned seething water rolling at them.

At any moment the magic whir-r-r of reels might send a thrill that would momentarily blot out all thought of the sublime grandeur of what we had seen.

There were but a few moments of expectancy before a reel noisily responded to the rush of a fish, and so commenced another enjoyable day's fishing.

I should be able to show you how successful this day was had the picture come out right.

It is fifty years since I first learnt how nearly allied are art and luck. My brother Tom was drawing on a slate, where gradually the outline of quite a noble animal appeared. Being anxious to know what it was I asked him to tell me, but he was so engrossed that he seemed not to hear, so I asked again, when he replied, "I wish you wouldn't be so impatient. I don't know myself till it's done, whether it will be a pig or an elephant." Tom was lucky, it turned out a splendid elephant.

Our camera gave capital results, sometimes for days together, but now and then it shied at certain objects. It was a real terror when faced with a group of fish. We tried it all ways; while the fish were in the boat, and again when they were laid out upon the rocks with utmost care so as to get the form of each one. At times nothing but blurs resulted which more resembled wildfowl than fish.

We got the photo I give you here after many failures, and, on the principle that half a fish is better than none, I felt as "sadly thankful" as a friend of mine said he was when a salmon, having taken all his line down Glenlyon Pass, left him the rod and winch.

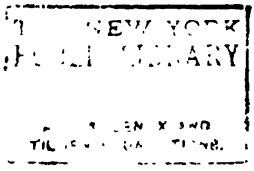
It's a sorry picure of a good day's take. I have, however, forgiven it all its failures because it was once especially kind to me and my long cherished designs to snap my son, who was ever unwilling to have his photo taken.

I came across the camera on the bank, set it, pointed it at him, pressed the trigger, heard the click and then turned the number handle just as I had seen him do.

When developing and printing time came he showed some irritation, but the result of my initiative effort in photography was so good a picture, and he so little prominent in it, that the aggrieved one at last consented to let me have the picture, and I here triumphantly display my production as a proof that there is some luck in art.

While fishing we are sure to make discoveries which we desire to impart to others. I sometimes think there must be a little vanity in this keenness to diffuse knowledge; or can it be that we give such information only from a sense of duty? Possibly it is a pleasant mixture of these two incitements that impels us. Be the motive what it may, I should like to tell you of yet another bait for pollack which

Photo by] "GOT HIM": "K. G." SNAPPED BY HIS OWN CAMERA. [*W. K. Green.*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sometimes absolutely irresistible. The dainty eeding conger takes it greedily, and it is a much rized bait on the cod banks of Newfoundland.

In return be patient while I tell you in a round-bout way how to get and use it.

The calmest, hottest pollack-fishing day I ever knew I spent on the Manacles in Cornwall. The sun shone from a blue sky with such intensity as to scorch the paint in blisters on our boat. So hot was it that the workers on the stranded *Paris* and on the ill-fated *Mohegan*, which had drowned her human cargo by the hundred, struck work for an hour or two during the unbearable midday heat. We drifted idly, by the hour, over miles of sunken rock, getting peeps at the wonderful world below, with now and then a sight of shoals of pig-fish (wrasse), bass, and bream, all bent on idleness; but not a pollack visible.

The birds, generally so numerous and so busy here, were in shady nooks, and everything said "No sport to-day." This was all the more regrettable because I had three of my sons on board who were to be witnesses of the effects of the irresistible bait, in the capture of which we had spent some hours the night before.

On the previous afternoon the ladies of our party had been taken out to be amused, and at the same time helpful, by "chadding," the necessary preliminary to "squidding."

Float lines had been rigged out and a pleasant

hour or two were spent catching those pretty hungry fish called chad.

At dusk our boat was anchored in Porthoustock Bay and, as we were tying dead chad to the strings that were to be our lines for the new sport, darkness fell quite suddenly and lamps were lit. Soon to one and then to another, of the lines came the drawing tug that tells of the clinging grasp of the octopus-like squid, our present prey. Then, while the line was being drawn very gently, the lantern was focussed on the uplifting line until the lure, showing silver save for the dark encircling tentacles, was near the surface. When not otherwise engaged I turned my search-light on each and every face in turn and had much diversion until the moon came up beyond the clouds and threw light and brightness everywhere.

Often the sucking fish would lose its hold and sink back to its home to wait for some less wondrously resisting food. Then the bait had to be dropped back, as quickly as could be managed, to tempt another tugging cling.

At times they brought the quarry within reach of my gaffing stick—a cane with a large triangle hook at the end of it—and there was a black commotion in the water that told good bait was ours for the morrow's fishing.

It would have been wiser had I kept strictly to my duties as gaffer and not entrusted them to my youngest son, for he, at his first attempt, lifted high

the squid before it had spent its ink, and I was deluged, and my mouth near filled, with its black fluid ire.

When this accident occurs—somehow it often does—every one is supposed to laugh, and the victim's laugh should be the loudest. The etiquette of games and sport, where boys are, must be upheld most strictly or you are classed a duffer; so, having cleared my mouth, I tried earnestly to do my part, as becomes a parent.

I fear they all outlaughed me except my eldest son, who made no sound. What could his silence mean? I turned to see and found him in a paroxysm of mirth; with sides heaving almost to bursting and wide opened mouth, from which his tongue spread out in such away that not a sound could come. Vinicombe, our Cornish fisherman, a short, thick-set man with florid face, was enjoying himself immensely over my misfortune and his laugh o'ertopped all others. When my look fell on him he tried to excuse himself by saying, "Oh, maister, you be such a sight," and then we did the laughing just once more.

The bait so taken we had with us on the hot day, on the Manacles, of which I am writing. It had been kept well hidden from the sun and we waited with skin-stiff faces for some hopeful signs of change.

At last the birds began to move, and, from Lizardwards, there came, with occasional hoverings

followed by headlong dives, the funnel-necked gannets that told the tide was coming and, with it, a shoal of mackerel or the more delicate and tasty pilchard.

It was time to choose the spot and let down our anchor where we could pay out line to reach the sunken rock that gives a holding to swarms of fish.

From behind us came the blowing of the noisy porpoise-school which passed close by in their long drill lines while, from almost overhead, the gannets hurled themselves down in quick succession on a mass of fluttering fish that made the water hiss and ripple in patches, that shifted almost as quickly as the cloud shadows on a sunlit meadow, as their enemies from beneath made rushes for them.

The now fast-flowing tide took toothsome white mouthfuls of our overnight captures into the very midst of this game of preyed upon and preying, and we were soon as busy as the busiest.

It was a happy time. Noisy voices called for gaff or another bait-piece and the impatient one girded his Dad for slowness, while his two brothers were desperately engaged with violent fish.

Then came trouble, for the youngest had allowed his line to become entangled at the winch while letting out his bait. A fish came on that caused his top joint to give loud serried knocks upon the gunwale of the boat, which ended in a snap, and there was one put out of action. Not for long; a smile came over the sudden-sorrowed face, and he

said, "Why, Dad, it's all right; you brought your rod."

What matter broken rods, inky faces, or other costs for that which leaves such pleasant memories.

It is quite a long drive from Dunfanaghy to Rosapenna, and it is as interesting as it is long. The four-wheel car does the journey in three hours and a quarter, and we found just that measure of delight in it, with countless jolts thrown in. I really think car jolts are worth much. Elderly people do not look well skipping, more's the pity, but we may jolt, and then our happy faces are quite becoming.

Rosapenna Hotel is an imposing structure, just midway between Mulroy and Sheephaven Bay. The position ensured opportunities for unlimited sea fishing, and the rivers we had crossed, within walking distance, looked as if sea-trout and salmon fishing would be at our disposal. Immediately in front of the hotel are sandy hillocks with flat grass-grown plots between, over which scarlet-coated men and short-skirted ladies walked and halted brandishing sticks, the ends of which flashed in the sun's rays. Evidently we were dismounting at quite a fashionable resort, and I had fears of the French *chef* and his concoctions, but those fears subsided, and we spent our short stay most comfortably.

The salmon fishing is free to visitors from April to the end of July, and there is practically unlimited trout fishing, but again the rain kept off. There

were those amongst the guests who had taken three salmon in a day, and others who had enjoyed splendid sport with trout. One fisher got 30, 32, 40, and 41 good fish, not bad totals for four successive days. We got fair baskets, but nothing to compare with this.

At last the long looked for rain, which had fallen everywhere except where we happened to be wanting it, came in earnest. All the afternoon it fell, and, although we had long since given over carrying waterproofs, we fished on until we were wet through with the warm rain, and the river had risen so considerably as to promise wonders for the morrow amongst the invigorated salmon, that, like ourselves, were gladdened by the copious downfall.

After dinner that night I interviewed Mr Manning, the manager, whom I found to be quite a keen sportsman, ready to read me up in all I needed. The favourite salmon flies are Claret Jay, Butcher, Lemon and Grey, and Durham Ranger, sizes to suit water, always remembering to favour the smaller of the two sizes which you think most suitable.

There are two rivers and four lakes within a short drive. From the latter trout up to 12 lb. have been taken.

Many times during that evening we listened to the rain; when in bed I heard its patter; and it was raining still when I fell asleep.

CHAPTER XVII.

MY IRISH RELATIVE—THE SUPERIOR TOURIST—THE COSTS OF FISHING.

THE welcome downpour had refreshed the face of Nature. The drooping flowers of yesterday now stood up in all their pride and glory, giving out gratefully of their fragrance to the cool and lingering breeze. The fishers, too, wore quite a different look; there was a springiness in their movements that had so long been sadly absent. Gillies had brought the news that the rivers were just perfection; so what more was needed to make men keenly sure of sport?

How strange must be the workings of the Fates that decide our movements! I might never have visited Ireland had it not been for a right good fellow, an Irishman, who is very Irish in thought and, at times, in speech.

Our first meeting took place when we both had grown so far to manhood as to desire to seek for mates, and, for a time, it seemed to me we both were paying court to the same lady—the elder of the two daughters that graced the home we had grown fond of visiting.

The Irishman had everything in his favour, excepting only that I had a little start. His height and breadth, his smiles, his twinkling eyes and wit-tipped, ready tongue, were such as left me nothing to compare with him. His appearance on the stage where I had been so happy in my young dreams, not yet told to her of whom I dreamt, was anything but pleasing to me from the very first, and I was fast learning to think unkindly of him, until one day he slapped me on the shoulder and said, "Cheer up, or, be jabers, it's the pair of them you'll be driving to these arms where there's only room for Amy."

I still remember the joy I felt when my load of fear was lifted by the words which showed that he was not my rival. I purposely make this story short. We married the sisters and thus I got an Irishman for brother-in-law and friend. From him I had to learn willy-nilly, my Anglo-Irish history, and from that learning came the eager wish to see his country—a wish ofttimes gratified.

By a whim of Fate it was he who called me back to England on this occasion, and, as his call was backed by forty years of friendship, I answered quickly, "Coming." I managed to catch the 3.15 from Londonderry that afternoon, travelled *viâ* Dundalk and Greenore, and at 7.30 next morning I was met at Euston with the good news that the crisis had passed, and that there was great hope of his recovery. He lives and still gives me lessons

and, in quite a proprietorial fashion, criticises my Irish writings.

This stay of ours in Ireland was a most pleasant one, and, while our sport with salmon was often disappointing, through the lack of rain, our sea fishing made amends.

Our success with pollack was such that no one could wish for better, and the enjoyment we obtained from all we saw and heard could not be much exceeded.

My many stays in Ireland have made me very susceptible to the winning ways of the Irish people. I liked them at my first visit to their country, and that liking has grown stronger with each succeeding visit.

Tourists may do something to help the men and women who are making such noble efforts to undo the effects of former errors. If we cannot do much we can, at least, try to think and speak kindly in the presence of a people more sensitive and quick-witted than ourselves.

Unfortunately, sooner or later, you are sure to meet the infinitely superior tourist whose words are measured, slow and weighty, with just sufficient space between each two words for the rolling sound of one to meet that of the other. How easily he leads the conversation during the dinner-hour, especially amongst strangers! He may talk of dirty cabins, or of palaces, with such ease and fluency, and with a voice so full of sound, yet

so smooth, soft, and seductive, that you must, at first, believe him.

It is quite the real article I write of now. He headed the table and was in his happiest mood. He had pretty listeners, prettily decked out, on either side of him, who listened to his every word while their eyes travelled up and down the table to take note of how we below the salt were affected by such Solomonic wisdom. We were not moved so very much, so the voice was raised a little and we heard it say:—"Country life has no charms for me, and the twaddle that one reads about the songs of birds and the music of brooks is only fit for children. Intellectual men have serious problems to occupy their thoughts. Country life and sport are for country people. Sport in any shape or form, does not appeal to me; it is a mere will-o'-the-wisp, a killer of time and, sometimes, I fear, a brutaliser of all the finer instincts."

What could one answer? A man who has no love for country life or sport of any kind must be a slightly lopsided creature, but I could not tell him so. He paused awhile, so I had my chance of taking up the cudgels, but I preferred to let him run his gait, which he soon recommenced to do by apologising for being in Ireland. He came to study the Irish Question on the spot, and he had formed opinions that must, he felt sure, be shared by all observant and thoughtful persons who had taken pains to study the Irish character in Ireland.

I must quote him, as his words, uttered in the presence of the two Irish waiting-maids, who listened with crimson angry faces, are burnt into my memory with the shame I felt. "I came here with quite an open mind. Indeed I was more than prepared to be pleased with the Irish people; but their poverty, their indolence, and their filthy, unfloored cabins, filled, crowded I should say, with pigs, fowls, and dirty, ragged children, have disgusted me."

I heard all this and wondered who would offer protest. A voice I knew quite near me whispered "Bless their little hearts." I had heard the same man use those words long years before when two baby boys were placed upon his knees with their white draperies trailing to his feet. The mother had died that day leaving him in charge of them with other children that made up just half a score. Since then his charges have grown to men and women, and he has been heard to say "Bless their little hearts," to grandchildren.

Would he not cause the roof to shake with his displeasure at hearing children spoken of in such a manner? He did not speak. I was too full of shame and anger. I should have been worsted in an instant by the semi-pious, smooth-tongued talker,

> "Whose native cheek, where facts are weak,
> In triumph brings him through!"

Then I thought kindly of the little red-haired, fiery-

tempered Enniskillen shopkeeper who had cursed me so roundly, and I longed for his presence there to hear him speak as he should think fitted the occasion.

The few superior tourists that I have met were gentlemen—yes, print it so—but, as may be seen from the following, taken from *T. P.'s Weekly*, gentlewomen are sometimes quite as indiscreet :—"Last summer a friend of mine heard two English ladies in a Dublin tram abusing at the top of their voices the 'dirty Irish,' and vowing that they would never revisit that filthy country. 'We shall try Wales next summer,' they concluded. 'Indeed, thin, ladies,' said a fishwoman opposite them, 'I wouldn't thry Wales, if I was ye. Sure, there are dirty Irish in Wales, too. I'll tell ye what ye'll do, now. Go to H—— for yer next holiday. Ye'll find no dhirty Irish there!'"

O, that our King Edward could give us, who need it so, a little of his priceless tact! Have these gentlefolks ever asked themselves whose fault it is that the cabin has no floorboards, and that the filling of little mouths with bread takes so much time as leaves very little for washing faces? Irish boys and girls may often have dirty faces, but there's grit beneath the dirt; they are healthy, quick-witted and, I add, on the authority of that excellent teacher, the Teelin schoolmaster, "quick to learn and a pleasure to teach."

Cannot we look forward and see them grown

into fine lads, as smart as smart can be, with a little cap on one corner of their heads and a narrow band of leather between their mouths and chins, the best of England's soldiers?

To condemn the Irish cabins wholesale is a great mistake, for I have sat inside many where I could have eaten my food from the spotlessly white table, and where the plates and dishes on the dresser shelves were clean enough for Royal visitors. The Queen herself would have felt at home with the inmates and have been pleased with their unaffected courtesy and the simple way in which they offered the best they had.

We English have only to look at home to see, even amongst those whose labour has full scope, improvidence, and other things that unfavourably compare with ducks, fowls and pigs, although they have no house or sty.

Materials with which to build, excepting stone, are costly and far to fetch. Wood there's none, excepting peat-blackened stumps where miles of forest-trees once stood.

It is easy to say a man is, or that a people are, lacking in enterprise, or that he or they are indolently inclined, or that his or their ambition is confined to a short pipe and a long look at the growing pig, but, wherever profit, that great sweetener of labour, is to be had, there is no lack of willing Irish workers.

Are the Irish the only people to cry out when

work is unprofitable? I know one man at least, who would soon cry in a loud voice "What is the use of it?"

By frugality amounting almost to meanness, by scraping here and there, the rent is set aside and the year goes by. The few acres of boggy land are not kind in the best of seasons, but when a wet one comes the only increment is another year and possibly another child.

Our poet asks—

> "What ails you, Sister Erin, that your face
> Is, like your mountains, still bedewed with tears?"

Had we all an Irish relative—as I have—we should be easily able to answer the poet's question.

What Irish men and women need is just a fair chance, and, fortunately, there are good men, and women too, working with all their might to give it them.

The Irish Agricultural Organisation Society has 80,000 members, principally small farmers, who, by their combination, can get their needs supplied for improved farming at the lowest price, while their produce is aided, in many ways, to reach the best market.

The Irish Cottage Industries Association is doing splendid work in providing profitable employment for the women. It is quite a pleasing sight to see the nimble fingers of women and girls

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knitting, while seated on hillocks or rocks near their cottages, or to meet them carrying bundles of completed work to store-houses.

It was the work of the Congested District Board I was most constantly coming in contact with, as it has done so much for the coast of Donegal.

To show how readily the men and boys took to new industries in the very district of which I am writing, I have taken the following from the Board's 1903 report.

"All the barrels manufactured at our cooperages during the year were made by coopers and apprentices belonging to the Teelin and Burtonport districts. The financial result of our barrel-making operations has been quite satisfactory, as the cooperages, which have been in operation during the past seven years, have proved to be self-supporting."

Our king had knowledge of all these good works, and had faith when he wrote:—"For a country so attractive and a people so gifted we cherish the warmest regard, and it is, therefore, with supreme satisfaction that I have, during our stay, so often heard the hope expressed that a brighter day is dawning upon Ireland. I shall eagerly await the fulfilment of this hope."

Possibly, some of my readers look to me for guidance in the matter of the costs of fishing.

When the purse is slender it is wise to know the

price before you make a start, and to beware of appearing as if you had the wealth of all the Indies.

Remember when King George I. was travelling *incognito* on the Continent, and wished to do so cheaply, he had to stop at an inn while they changed horses. He spent the time in having tea and eggs. When paying the bill he found that the eggs were charged for at the rate of twenty marks apiece.

"What! are eggs so scarce here, then?" he asked the landlord.

"No, sire; but kings are."

It aids you much to know exactly what you want, to ask for it plainly, and sometimes, if occasion needs it, to boldly state your price.

I fear I am a bad adviser of how to proceed cheaply. Having seen, approved and paid my bill, I crumple it in my hand and say good-bye to it quickly.

To each of my two men at Burtonport I gave five shillings per day, which included the use of their boat, and the hotel charged eight shillings the day or fifty for a week. I thought these charges reasonable. You can get a boat and man for much less than half ten shillings, but my desire for roughish water, which helps the fish to feed during the glare of a summer day, calls for two men, and, as I am never tired, they have to work long hours, and thereby fully earn their pay.

I don't know of any sport so cheap and certainly of none so good.

Cheap, or dear, the time comes when I must go fishing. I don't want all the sea or all the river so I make no secret of where I get my joys

To see men or boys fishing, be they known to me or not, gives me pleasure, just as seeing them do wrong would cause me pain.

Toil is an inheritance we cannot escape, but we may learn to spend our leisure in such a manner as will best fit us to resume our tasks.

I have taught every boy of our big family to fish, and I hope there is not one amongst them, indeed I am sure there's not, that would fudge at marbles.

Boys that have been taught to play fair and tell the truth give little trouble and heaps of pleasure; yes, heaps and heaps,

I know men who only care for making money and who appear to need no breaks in their yearly toil and, if an enforced one comes on, it is to them the greatest toil of all.

They are much to be pitied who have no hobby to fall back upon. When they have had their fill of money-making there is no retirement for them, as that would mean rust, and then not all their wealth can purchase for them the pleasures of wholesome sport.

A hobby such as fishing is infinitely more than a filler in of time. Who has gone often to the river-

side to fish and not felt the better for it? Kind thoughts must come to him and make kinder all he does and says.

Fishing is worth all you can afford to pay for it as, in addition to its immediate gifts, the memories it leaves of happy days are priceless; especially so, when you tell of them to your children, and, maybe, to your children's children, as I now tell of them to mine.

PART II.

SPRING SALMON FISHING IN SCOTLAND.

SPRING SALMON FISHING IN SCOTLAND.

NOTE:—*It may help the reader to a clearer reading of these Scotch writings to let him know that they were written for the* Fishing Gazette *during one of my visits to Fortingall.*

CHAPTER I.

SPINNING IN THE LYON—POOLS THAT CAN BE FISHED FROM KENMORE—STONING A SULKY FISH.

FOR over thirty years, without a break, I have been on the Tay, or its tributary the Lyon, on the opening day, doing my best to feel as young, and to succeed as well, as in the years when I could leap from rock to rock to gain an advantageous point from which to work my lures.

I have never failed to be more or less successful, but, that it may be understood that I lay no claim to superior talent, I must add that I have always remained until Fortune favoured me—a safe rule to adopt, though sometimes an expensive one.

In this matter of time I have the advantage over such professional piscatorial writers as the late, deservedly much-esteemed, generous-hearted Wheeldon, who wrote most graphic articles on

"Thames Trout Capture" for many years before he caught his first fish, which he did from the lawn sloping to the river immediately before he went to take part in the annual dinner of the Windsor and Eton Preservation Society. I remember quite well his exclamation—"At last! at last!"

Had I but a small portion of his talent for writing, what tales of glorious tussles with the big Tay winter salmon I could relate; tussles which meant almost as much danger to the wielder of the rod as to the fish! To appreciate the difficulty of following your fish it would be necessary to see the riverside, up the glen, when it is free from snow and ice, and again to see it fished when covered. You would then understand that it is a not very uncommon incident to find yourself up to the chin in snow, plus a nasty bruise or two; and lucky is the man who has fished much in the Lyon and has not fallen into its roaring waters and been gaffed. I could tell of tussles with large fresh-run fish that had to be killed or lost under the point of the rod; for not a yard up or down may you move in some places. My plan, under such circumstances, is never to let him dig his toes in. Lower your top into the water, if need be, rather than give an inch of line. Keep him, if you can, turning in a circle.

But in the lower portions of the river there are many splendid pools, with grass-covered, sloping banks, which may be fished with ease and comfort; pools in the turns of the river, sheltered from the

cold winds, where you may imagine yourself by Thames side.

The fascinations of Glen Lyon in mid-winter are manifold, even when the year is but fifteen days old, and the river, with its quickly varying moods from lowest level to its highest flood, is a study in transformation scenes. A nip of frost and you may see its fall, while an hour of sunshine will bring water that will cause the fish to move a pool or two, and then sport should be yours. Oh, yes, I love the Lyon in winter almost as much as in summer-time!

Jan. 15 in each year is a date of considerable moment to the winter salmon-fisher, who begins to feel its approach before Christmas. A spoken word, or a written line, to the man who has for long years suffered from the insidious malady known as spring salmon fever and the contagion spreads, the spell begins to work, and the sooner Jan 15 comes the better for all concerned.

Of course, it was my old companion, "A. C. J.," who gave it to me this year; he denies it, and maintains that it was "P.," who in turn says it was "W."; no matter, we all confessed that we had it badly when we met at Euston.

For happy faces, cheery expectations and joyous talk, you should take a seat in the smoking saloon of a sleeping-car of the 8 P.M. from Euston on Jan. 14. Old fogies all—your pardon, sirs—but with a zest of life which is often erroneously considered as

an attribute of youth only. The buoyancy of spirits in these old warriors is no mere parody of youthfulness; they actually feel that life is still immensely enjoyable, and they are travelling North to wade, if need be, knee-deep in snow or to their waists in water for what they must have to satisfy their annual craving for sport with spring salmon.

Since last these aged youths had met they had travelled far in search of sport: A C. J. and P. to Lapland, W. to Norway, and G. to Ireland. Each told his tale, and I believed all they said, and it was very unkind of J., when I told of my Irish fish, to suggest that I must have been baiting my hook with whales. I should not have minded so much had not his "whales" been such a stale joke. I can always forgive J. most readily. The more he puts me out the greater his peace offering. He must have thought me terribly put out for almost immediately he was asking my opinion of a rod which he said was an 11ft. 6 in. Grant Vibration rod for spinning. His manner was just such as is usual when he is smoothing down my ruffled plumes; but a Grant Vibration rod, which I had heard so much about, could not be coming to me in this manner! It did, and often since then, when the bait has been taking its flight to a far distance, sent by the slightest of switches from this toy of a rod, and when it has been gracefully bending from top to butt with the rush of a 20 lb. fish, I have been thinking what I shall give my friend in return. He

said at the time, "Your gratified, not to say child-like, smile, my boy, is very satisfying." No doubt I did look pleased.

The river Lyon commences, or rather ends, with its junction with the Tay about a mile below Loch Tay. The Junction Pool is now reserved by the Marquis of Breadalbane for his personal friends, so I will pass it by, merely saying I once got two splendid fish from it while fishing from Mr. Knight's Hotel, Kenmore, who has the privilege of granting permission to visitors for three miles from above the Junction Pool on the left bank. Kenmore is a most comfortable place at which to stay. I did so for many years, and have great respect for Mr. and Mrs. Knight.

From their hotel you may also fish Loch Tay by payment of £1 for each fish—a recent and, I should say, most satisfactory arrangement. The mere mention of Loch Tay brings back memories of numerous happy days and many a score of its splendid fish. I think it may be best to complete my description of the left bank of the Lyon up so far as Mr. Knight's fishing extends.

Ferry Pool.

This is the name given to the first pool, a long and rather slow-running one, with rocks and large boulders on the off side. Here you will find a boat which your gillie will manœuvre while you cast

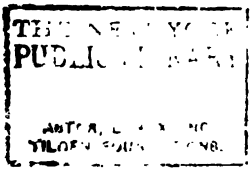
well over and a little down. Draw in as ge... you may. Immediately after or during a s... the time; fish are soon on to the next pool. H... ever, I once got as many as three fish from h... in a little more than an hour.

Lime-Kiln Pool.

This is a very good pool and has always a fish or two, and sometimes many. It may be fished from the bank with ease. Begin at the very top, where the water sets off from the rocks. You can cast across. Search every inch and do not move from your first standing until you have fished as far and as carefully as you can. If you get no success, change your bait rather than move farther down the pool as yet. I have taken fish here with my third or fourth bait, when a less patient angler would have been exposing himself to view by walking on the rock. I cross the rock on my hands and knees and, if necessary, go back over the four baits in this second cast. When hooked, fish seldom leave this pool, so do not haul at them to breaking strain. Be patient, and they will be yours.

Oak Tree Pool.

This pool is some eighty yards above, and quite a miniature affair, about six feet deep when in ply. The water eddies round under the oak, and it is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there that, at times, you may find a fish resting. I have taken a few herein, but Mr. Knight has taken many. Indeed, he would not like the river as he does were it not for the Oak Tree Pool.

Rocky Pool.

This is undoubtedly the best pool in this portion of the Lyon, so be careful to make the most of it. There are sure to be fish, and they may take in this when they would not in any other.

There are holes between the rocks twenty feet deep, and shelter for any number. Commence as high up as the bank will permit; indeed, always do so, as it may be that a fish is, with nose on the shallow, longing to be on up stream.

Spend time here and show them sprat or gudgeon, and Phantoms of divers colours, and, if thus you do not succeed, play your trump card and put on a 3-in. Natural Spin.

I may mention, for the encouragement of novices at spinning, an incident that occurred here.

I was fishing the opposite bank when I saw Mr. Knight approaching from his side. Just as I got to the pool a fish rose, and, after a moment's thought, it occurred to me that it would be a pleasure to see Knight catch it. He had done me many fishing kindnesses, and driven me to the river, and also given me first chance on many occasions. I reminded him of this, and, in reply

to his protest, told him I would not fish unless he went over the pool first.

I showed him the spot, and, strange for him, he made a poor cast, entangled his line in his top joint, freed it after many seconds, yet, when he commenced to draw in his line, found he had the fish on, and killed it.

Many and many a good fish has gone to Mr. Knight's hotel from here. In the billiard room may be seen the cast of a 31½ pounder which Mr. Knight gaffed for me.

The river was in full spate when it was taken. We had fished the Lime-Kiln, and, on nearing this pool, we saw that it was being fished by Sir Donald Currie's son-in-law, accompanied by Ford, head keeper. Of course we kept away, proceeding up stream. I heard the keeper call, and, looking round, saw that he was beckoning to us. So we returned, thinking there was some entanglement which they desired us to free from our side. Instead of which it transpired that Ford had spoken of my method of fishing—which I shall attempt to fully describe to you later on—and was desirous that I should give a demonstration of it.

I hesitated, and, while I did so, a fish rose close to their feet, and a very long cast from where I should have to stand. I drew out my line and made a cast for a corresponding distance in a totally different direction, drew back the line and

cast my bait for the spot. It fell within a few inches of land, and, as I raised the point of my rod to keep the bait free from the large stones until another foot or two in the stream, I felt the line tighten, and, with a quick, bold stroke, I was into a fish.

Now, between banks there were thirty yards of rushing river, through which my fish must come that I might have control and not be hampered by length of line in such a stream. Ford, too, seeing the danger of his going down where I could not follow, called to me to hold all I could. It is generally well to give a fish the butt when he runs from you, but in such a case as this it is at a very different angle at which you must operate, as the strain necessary is greater than any rod can stand. When it comes to hold or break it is a question of strength of line with little help from rod.

I held until I could feel the line stretch and stretch, and, knowing that the break would come, I determined to adopt an old plan of mine which has succeeded more than once—to give him line as quickly as I could. This did not answer as fully, or as quickly, as I have sometimes known it to do. When I tightened up I found my fish was below the pool behind a rock in mid-stream.

For a full half hour four persons, two on either side, worked with a will, more than one with hat off, stoning the sulky rascal. At last it came back with a rush, and, fortunately, to my side, where I

soon had my will of it, and Mr. Knight did the needful.

I shall not forget the kindness or the undoubted delight of Sir Donald's son-in-law, and that of Ford, the keeper. The struggle had been a strain, and I was glad of lunch, a pipe, and a thought or two. Of course, I was pleased at my success with the grand fish and with my audience, but my last thought was that those who can aid and rejoice at another's success while fishless themselves are most to be envied.

There are yet two pools in this fishing of which I must say a few words.

Ash Tree Pool.

This is a half-mile farther up—moderately deep, with gravel bottom, and large stones at the narrowing head. It is from amongst, or behind, these that the fish may be expected to come, so, as usual, commence well up-stream. It was here that I got two salmon in two casts, and, as each had attempted to swallow the lure, it did not take long to land the choked fish—certainly not ten minutes.

Garth Castle Pool.

This is in the last half mile—an extensive, deep, sullen, flagon-shaped affair. It is seldom that a fish is taken from it other than kelts; now and

then, however, you may have success in the stony neck; so try there, but waste little time. Return to the two best pools below that you may yet go back to Kenmore with a fish and receive the congratulations and welcome of your ever charming hostess, Mrs. Knight.

CHAPTER II.

A GRAND SCOTCH SPORTSMAN—MY METHOD OF CASTING—THE TACKLE I USE.

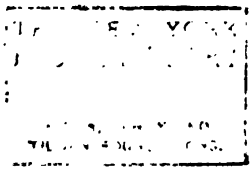
THE Lyon to me, in the Spring, is the beau-ideal of a salmon river, containing, as it does, every kind of water that the heart can wish for. Here are falls, rapids, broken pools, rocky rushes, and swift, yet unbroken, currents. The fish are large, from 15 lb. to 40 lb., and are full of vigour and fight, qualities which are often enhanced to such an extent by bank difficulties that the victory is theirs.

To write of the fishing in Glen Lyon and leave out the name of the late Sir Robert Menzies, Bart., would be too absurd, as every one in Perthshire is proud of that great sportsman. Some will tell you of the far-stretching lands he owned, reaching to the shores of Loch Rannoch, others of his kindness and generosity, and many of the plucky way in which he laid hold, held fast and never let go, where he thought he was right, until the highest legal tribunal said him nay.

This truly grand Scotchman presided, until

Photo by] [*Messrs. T. and R. Annan & Sons, Glasgow.*

THE LATE SIR ROBERT MENZIES, BART.



past midnight, at a Burns dinner, and, as his pipers played, he forgot his eighty-five years and was as young as when he rowed in the Oxford eight.

I shall always think kindly of Sir Robert for his courtesy to me when we met at the "Boat-Pool," one side of which is his and the other Lord Breadalbane's. I wished him to fish first, but he insisted on my doing so, and the care with which his men went down over the shallow side of the pool, under his direction, so as not to disturb it impressed me as being most sportsmanlike.

It may be best, before proceeding to tell you what I know of the fourteen miles of fishing which may be enjoyed by staying at the Fortingall Hotel and the payment of ten shillings per day, that I should redeem my promise and describe to you my tackle and the method of using it.

The cramped position from which many spots have to be fished has necessitated the practising of numerous ways of casting. Winches, no matter how free, are sometimes useless, and the coil in the hand seldom enables you to reach the lie of the fish. The Thames coil is equally out of the question as, unless you can carry with you something to coil it on, the line will be constantly catching in twigs, thorns, or rubbish left by receding waters, and tangles will be inevitable.

What is really needed is a method that can,

in the first place, dispense with the half-circle swing, and, secondly, a method that can be used all day long with one hand with little fatigue; a method that almost automatically provides a free coil at an elevation a little below and to the left of the ring through which the line commences its journey; so that, when the finger releases it as the cast is made, there is no resistance, and the bait in its flight helps itself to what line it requires. No winch can do this, neither can it supply line with the delicate variations of speed that take place in the rise and fall of the bait during its flight.

There are numbers who have witnessed, and many who have adopted, amongst others our present Prince of Wales, a plan which so nearly complies with the ideal, which I have roughly sketched, that I will presume that it is worth the space necessary to give full particulars for the guidance of others.

Get then a light and stiff bamboo rod, nine feet in length, to which add twelve inches of stout tapering whalebone for the top, and let the whole rod weigh not more than 16 oz. Have light winch fittings, and three rings only, of aluminium wire with ivory centres, and of such a size that a pigeon's egg could be put through the top ring and a hen's egg through the one that is two feet from the winch fittings. The third ring should be between these two in size and equidistant from

them on the rod. A dressed line, not too fine nor too bulky. If it be too fine it will kink, if bulky it tends to shorten the cast, besides being too visible to the fish. Select a line that is neither too dry nor too sticky as regards the dressing. I use a light green "Olena" line. Let there be not less than one hundred yards, and to the end attach securely, but not clumsily, a ½ oz. lead.

All kinds of leads have been tried here and on the Tay, but it is seldom now, when wire is universally used by old hands, that any other is used than that which was first made by myself to meet the new requirements—namely, "The Combination Lead and Swivel." Having attached your line to one end of this lead proceed to fasten the four or five feet of wire, one end to the lead and the other end to your lure.

You will find now that the lead, with the whole of its weight below the draw, prevents the possibility of the spinning bait giving any twist to the line, and at the same time does away with the need for swivels on your clean, invisible, not-to-be-broken-on-rocks, wire trace.

Anticipating the difficulty I should have in describing my arrangement for this almost automatic coiling at an elevation where the line is ever ready to shoot forward, I got my son to photograph my rig-out.

Notice the tin strapped to my waist, and carefully notice the shape of the tin, as it is necessary

that the inner side should be concave to fit the hip, which, together with the leather strap, affords such support to the body generally as to cause you actually to miss something when not using it. The measurements are:—Nine inches broad, that is from hip to front; fourteen inches long, and five inches high, excepting at the curved openings which are two and a half inches.

The openings are for the free working of the hand and arm at the drawing of the line, and the height elsewhere helps the coiling and is a protection for the line from the wind.

This size and shape of tin will be found the most convenient for the reception of the coil, which the length of line drawn in at each pull will make. The slightest quantity of water put into the tin draws the coils down one on the other, and keeps the whole of the line moist and easy-running,—hence tin, and not wicker-work. I desire to render credit to my friend, Mr. James Temple, the well-known piscatorial artist, for the idea of attaching a something to the waist into which the line could be coiled. He used a wicker basket for many years, and it was from a duplicate of his basket, which he kindly gave me, that the side-fitting tin was evolved.

On the leather belt is a leather socket into which the butt of the rod fits, and which takes from the right arm much of its most arduous work.

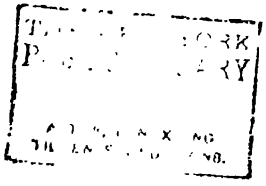


Photo by] [*J. H. Sta*

LONG-LADDER OUT OF PLY.

MY SPINNING OUTFIT.

On the rod, between the finger and thumb, is a small ivory reel which revolves on a pin. I draw my line over this, and at the end of each draw I drop the forefinger of my right hand on the line to hold it until my left hand comes again for another draw. This has proved a most successful way of preventing the sore fingers which always result from a long day's drawing of the line through them, especially in frosty weather.

The outfit being now complete, it only needs a pleasant fancy to carry you to the river bank, where you must not forget to ask your gillie to dip the bottom of your flask in the water, and put its contents into your casting tin. Find the cleanest spot you can to pull out fifteen to twenty yards of line, which draw through the forefinger and thumb of right hand and drop into coils in the tin at your side, and you are then ready to cast. When drawing in the line let the first draw drop outside the tin that there may be no tight connection between the coil and your rod. Commence always with short casts, as the line after a few casts becomes supple, and then little likely to give trouble. Increase your cast progressively by pulling off from the winch a few yards between the casts, or even when the cast is made, provided that you are sure of the depth.

After the first day's practice you will discover that a considerable length of line can be got out by the aid of the whalebone top and a kick of the

hip, without any backward swing of the rod. So, no matter how cramped your position, no matter how lengthy a cast you desire in an open place, you will find that you do not require to bring your rod farther back than in a line with your body. Having the rod in this position wave the bait gently backwards, and, when the bait is at the end of the swing, sweep your rod forwards with the necessary force to reach the spot, towards which your top ring and your eye should be brought.

A grand secret to be discovered is how little power is really necessary. Sometimes twenty to thirty yards may be got out with as little exertion as is required for the throwing of food to chickens.

Unnecessary vigour is not only a waste of strength and a spoiler of the pleasure of doing things correctly, but also frequently defeats the end in view.

Economy of strength may be important even to the strongest before the day is through, so work you in easy attitude; no bendings of the body, as is the case when winding during spinning from the winch.

There are those, I have met them, who like to swish out forty yards and draw it in again as fast as possible that they may do the pool, and the next, and next, in the quickest time. The non-success of such fishers worries me, for I can fancy

how much they need success to make their lives bearable.

The certainty of fish being in a pool that is in ply, and which you can fish to your satisfaction, should cause you to linger even after doing your best. Don't let your brain conjure up thoughts of hungry, open-mouthed fish at the next pool. Try these again, and remember that it is possible to so worry a salmon with a variety of baits as to rouse his temper to such a pitch that he cannot refuse. I am not making a guess, but writing of a fact that I have witnessed.

The weight of the lead must at times be varied according to the depth or the swiftness of the stream, remembering always that the more slowly a perfectly spinning lure passes the likely spot the greater are the chances. Remember also to fish as deep as possible. Salmon, at this time of the year, are much more likely to seize a bait that spins quite near them than to rise and follow, and when they perform this latter operation they have much more time to discover the deception. When directly over the lie of the fish make many casts beyond, bringing your bait to him in as varied a manner as possible.

The slightest check while you are drawing in the line should be instantly answered by a smart strike, and if it be a fish he should be held tightly for the first few seconds. Be careful when the fish is coming to you; wind in quickly, but do not pull;

wait until he turns, and is going from you; then put the strain on, which, together with his struggles, will embed the hook.

Lessen the pressure when he is running and rising, as it may be that the run will end in a leap. Should this be the case, down with the point of your rod that he may not fall on a taut trace.

After this you have only to exercise care and patience, and you will have him.

CHAPTER III.

FISHING FROM FORTINGALL—A SEAL-BITTEN SALMON—ROCKY POOL—LIME KILN POOL.

THE dale of Fortingall is in the shape of a semi-circle, with Garth Castle, the beautiful residence of Sir Donald Currie, at the lower end of the straight side. In the centre, with the river making the half circle in front at a distance varying from half to three-quarters of a mile, stands a most conveniently arranged hotel, recently rebuilt by Sir Donald. Immediately in front of it stands Drummond Hill, from the top of which a splendid view of Taymouth Castle may be had, as also of beautiful Loch Tay; behind it are the lofty hills which lead up to the great Schiehallion.

At the upper end of the dale there is an opening in the high enclosing hills, invisible until closely approached, through which you enter Glenlyon Pass.

Emerging from the pass you enter Glenlyon proper, with its wide river stretching for another thirty-five miles, up the full length of which spring

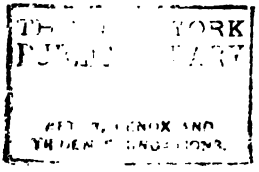
salmon perseveringly travel to their spawning beds.

The conformation of the glen may be generally described as a succession of long bends, the angles of which consist of mountain spurs that so closely approximate at certain points as to make the beholder think he has attained his goal, and that the little opening before him has no ulterior, beyond, at most, a small mountain corrie.

His astonishment increases as he enters another, and still another, bend, in generals so like, but in particulars so dissimilar from, the preceding ones. Thus the scene shifts, from beginning to end. The hills, rising almost perpendicularly from the bed of the river, give the whole glen its individuality of character, and help it to form a little world by itself.

It is of the salmon pools in the dale, in the pass, and in the three miles of river beyond, that I have undertaken to write, but I find it impossible to concentrate all my thoughts on the fishing.

I hear the kirk bell next door, and here come the kirk goers. How many times I have hidden behind the curtain and watched them until the last in the slow procession had passed and was safely within the doors! Then I have gone boldly out for a long walk up the glen. After proceeding about a mile you may see me jump the low wall that divides the road from the river, where I shall peep down, straight down, some forty feet, and quite forget the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plan of a long walk. Here I once counted forty-one fish, and selected from among them some half-dozen thirty-pounders that I would try for on the morrow. Never a one, was my luck!

Listen to the rain! There is a knock at the door, and, in reply to my "Come in," a maid appears to inform me that my host, Mr. MacPhail, thinks I should like to know that it is raining. Soon after, and before I could get my thoughts from the prospects that the rain had opened up, another maid came to make the fire, and she thought that the rain had really come, and that there would be a lovely river in the morning. I gave the only reply possible, not original, I believe, that if the river was only half as lovely as Kitty I should get no end of fish.

It is a pretty sight, to a waiting-for-a-spate fisherman, to see the mountain side shedding innumerable tears which look like threads of silver streaking its face. It is so pretty that I must perforce have yet another wee peep, and then I will commence to write.

Lime Kiln Pool.

I described this pool from the Breadalbane side, and will only say the two or three words necessary to impress upon the fisherman the fact that it is a good pool and deserving of his best attention.

It can be fished from this side, the right bank,

with greater comfort and ease, and from higher up and lower down, than from the other side.

Last year I hooked a fish here, quite up amongst the stones at the top—a fish, the wild rushing of which I never saw equalled. It came out on to the bank at least two yards, but, before my gillie could reach the spot, he was back again, rushing and leaping more like an infuriated bull than anything else I can compare it to. Of course, the fight was as short as it was furious, and the cause of the fearful fright of the fish was soon explained; a piece, quite as large as the palm of one's hand, had been recently bitten from his side.

Rocky Pool,

The Oak Tree, which is between this and the Lime Kiln, cannot be profitably fished from this side, so I pass it by, merely mentioning that to try it means loss of tackle. It is in the Rocky that you will most probably get a fish. Commence close up to the broken water as shown by the photo. Work carefully and slowly, always exposing yourself as little as possible to the chances of being seen.

This can be done at your ease, for rocks lie along the bank as if put there to hide you from the fish, and yet give no hindrance to your casting. Begin above the highest rock, and, while standing close to the edge of the water, make a few short

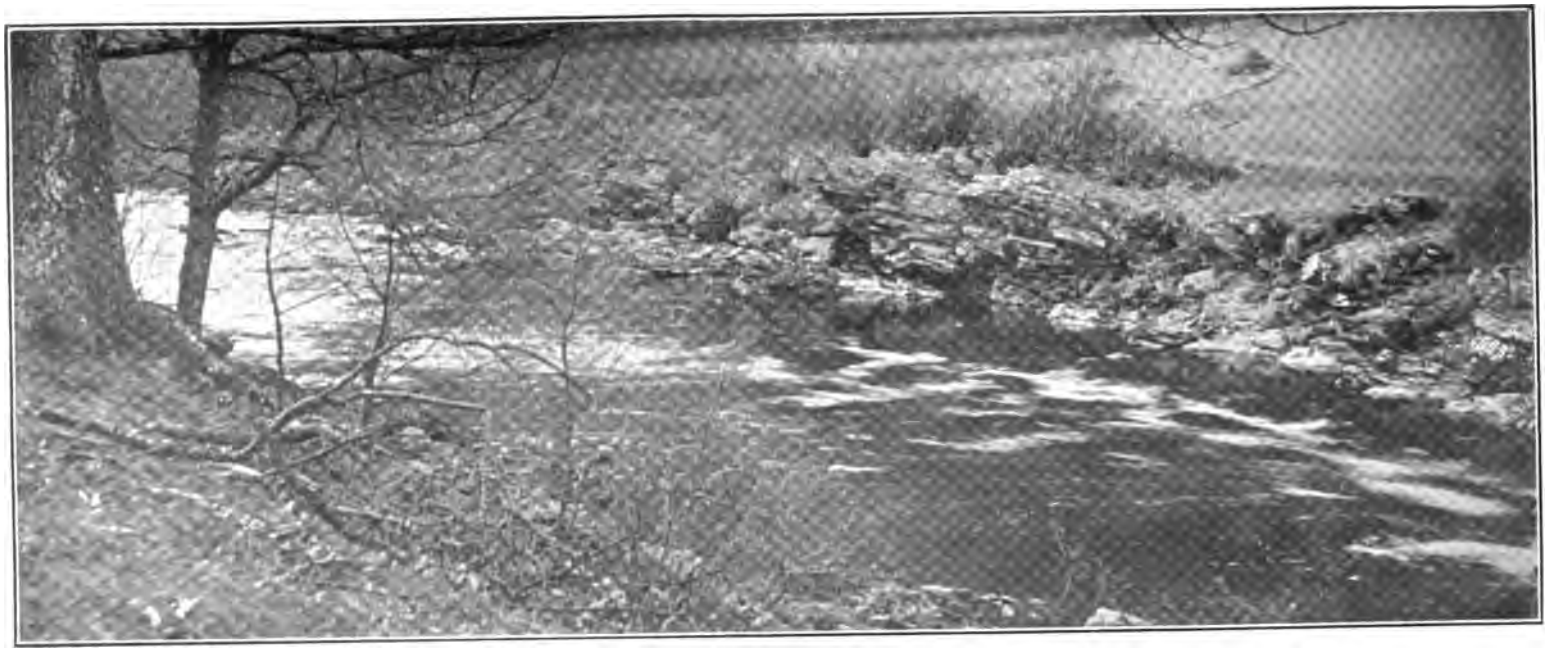

Photo by] [*J. H. Stewart.*

ROCKY POOL ON THE LYON.

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casts straight in front, allowing your bait to trundle in under your feet, where there is a depth of at least twenty feet of water. Cast down and across, searching every inch more than once for so far as you can reach, making the most of the stream by manipulating the top of your rod.

The next best cast is in the tail, almost down to where the water breaks. When the pool is in ply the fish are in the centre of the stream, but if a spate is running they are behind the large stones near the bank. It was from behind one of these that I got my thirty-one pounder and many another fish.

It will be best when you have finished here, if you have no intention of giving the Lime Kiln another trial—a new-comer may be there—to take the road and walk straight to "Garth."

What more I wrote on that wet day I have put aside that I may tell you now that the soft winds and heavy rains were followed by a flooded river on the Monday, which put success out of the question; so I will on to Tuesday, which proved a red-letter day, as you shall hear.

The news of my Saturday's fish (three, 20, 24, 29 lbs.) had been wired to *The Scotsman*, and fishers had seen that the spring salmon were up; and up they came, too, from Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Newcastle. Old friends met, lots were drawn for beats, and all started with circumstances favourable and with great expectations. The Garth water fell to

my lot, and when I caught sight of the Rocky, and remembered that the same water would suit the pool below, I was delighted with my chances. I started work, as I have advised my readers, above the highest overhanging rock, and at my third cast a fish came up out of the deep water almost at my feet, missed the bait, and refused all my subsequent offers, no matter the colours or shape.

I worked carefully to the tail, and was then rewarded by seeing the even flow of my line across the stream retarded, and knowing that my bait was well above the stones and rocks, I struck and held tightly. There was a tug, a rush and a leap, after which I coaxed him back up into the deeper part to kill and land him there, so as to keep the tail of the pool quiet that there might be a prospect of getting his mate.

I was rewarded for taking this care. After a few casts a little above I threw to the spot which would cause my bait to come just over the sunken rock. Again my line tightened, and an almost similar result followed, even to the leaping of the fish. I was not quite so successful in getting him quickly up-stream, but I had got my second nice fish.

At the head of Lime Kiln Pool, and at its narrowest part, where it is necessary to keep your bait well up and almost in sight, I saw the wave of a following fish, and, of course, I continued the draw exactly as it was going before I had seen

the wave, until I felt a check; then I struck and held until the struggles had firmly fixed the hooks.

I tried my hardest to keep as much of the pool as possible free from disturbance, but all in vain. I had a wild customer to deal with, which never allowed me to get within twenty yards of him until he had raced, jumped and flopped, all over the place. This, together with my following up and down the bank as closely to my fish as circumstances permitted, was sufficient to make further success for a considerable time a remote chance, so there was nothing better to do than to be canny in making sure of the one in hand. This proved a most fortunate decision, for, when the fish was gaffed and lifted, the hook left the torn hold, and, as it was a beautiful fish of 20½ lb., I was pleased with myself.

Thus, by one o'clock, I was the proud possessor of three pretty spring salmon, weighing 14 lb., 17 lb., and 20½ lb.

The best definition that I know with regard to "What is sufficient for a man?" is "A little more than he has." Be that as it may, I had no sooner eaten my lunch and smoked a pipe than I was on my way to the Rocky to try again for the fish that rose so readily in the morning.

Again he came, and at the first cast. I held him tightly as he dived towards his hole, giving him line grudgingly until I knew the hook must

be home. I felt sure, before I saw it, that I had a much heavier fish than either of those already caught, and I determined to do my very best, no matter what time he took, nor how much he might disturb the pool. For a full half-hour he fought. At one moment he was in the broken water at the tail of the pool, and at the next the line was cutting its way towards the centre, after which he would be deep down under my feet again. He appeared to to be master of every dodge likely to regain for him his freedom, and if ever a fish deserved it he did. What is more, he got it. He was on his side with open mouth coming gently to be gaffed, when the hold, worn out, gave way.

Mr. James Arnott, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, was the only other fortunate fisherman. He had one of 18 lb., which was duly despatched to his family. I mention this latter fact as Mr. Arnott, on his first visit here, had but just commenced to fish when he got one of 20 lb., and, thinking fish plentiful, handsomely sent it to the hotel to be cooked for the guests' dinner. It was good eating, and we drank Arnott's health and wished him many and many another good fish before his week's stay should be over. I am sorry to have to add that these good wishes were of little avail—he returned home without a fish.

Should you ever have the pleasure of meeting Mr. James Arnott remind him of this, and then listen to his hearty laugh.

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Photo by] GARTH POOL AT ITS LOWEST SUMMER LEVEL. *[T. H. Stewart.*

CHAPTER IV.

GARTH POOL—PLANTATION POOL—ANDERSON'S FERRY POOL—PETER'S POOL—FANNY'S POOL—BROOM POOL.

I WILL now take up my task again from the spot where I interrupted myself to give you an account of my good day in the Lime Kiln and Rocky pools.

I was about to describe

GARTH POOL.

This section of the river is under the personal charge of Mr. Ford, whose cottage is behind the trees on the left of the photo. He fishes it for his master, Sir Donald, with great skill—the result of long experience. If you have not already made his acquaintance you should call on him. He will readily give you information, the best of advice, and, what is more rare, he will rejoice if you are successful. You will be a bolder man than I have been if you venture to offer him other reward than thanks.

There are steps, ending in a concrete landing, from which the best portion of the pool can be fished, and it is from this spot that Ford has caught many of his best fish.

Plantation Pool.

Pass round the upper side of the keeper's cottage and follow the path leading to the river and you will come to a sharp bend where the water sweeps off to the opposite side. Here is a rather deep eddy, between which and the stream fish rest before they attempt the long shallow which is before them. Try a bait or two, and, if unsuccessful, on to

Minister's Pool.

This is a very nice pool to look at, and Ford at times gets a fish from it. I must confess myself completely beaten by it, and in such a thorough fashion that I pass it by, and am on to

Anderson's Ferry Pool,

where I have taken fish, both from the bank and from one of the two ferry-boats. The bottom is of rough stones, and there is plenty of hiding for the fish; yet, I fancy, it is a resting place rather than a home, as it is only when the fish are running, and there is a good flow of water, that I have been successful.

From here for the next mile is a series of gravel shallows which offer the best possible conditions for the autumn spawning salmon. The river is broad, with a good fall of water varying from one to six feet in depth, with gravel from the finest to the coarsest. Here, every November, hundreds of fish may be seen busy at their work, and, even in the middle of January, a few late couples are to be seen completing their task in perfect security.

From Garth to Fortingall Bridge the fishing belongs to Sir Donald on both sides, and is at the disposal of visitors here. The left bank is rented from the Marquis with the shooting on Drummond Hill, and with it come the services of the keeper, Peter Dewar, who, when I first met him, impressed me as being a grand specimen of the Highlander.

Having introduced you to Peter Dewar, everyone's favourite, it would be well to give you a description of that portion of the river which is under his care, leaving MacLennan's charge until last, as it stretches some miles farther up the glen.

Peter will be here at the hotel in good time in the morning to learn your wishes, to view your tackle, and to see that you do not start without any one of the things necessary for your sport, and, I may add without causing him to blush, for your comfort and his.

He will take you over Fortingall Bridge, from which you will get a view of the long stretch of the river which runs straight down from the falls, and, on turning to the left, you will get your first glimpse of Poul Lonie, more generally known as

PETER'S POOL.

It would be within the mark to say that there are more fish taken every season from this than from any other three pools, and that there are more to be seen leaping here than in all the others taken together. This was the great netting spot—there is no netting now—and I am told, and can well believe, that as many as forty fish have been taken from it in one haul of the net.

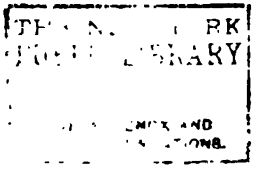
Those who would like to fish this pool, which has its commencement at the spot in the bridge photo where the foam is gathered in the centre, should bring their waders, as parts can be so fished with much better chance of success.

That care and caution are needed in the case of fishermen wading here is proved by the following incident. Mr. G. W. Skinner, of South Kensington, showed himself most skilful with the help of his waders and for days in succession he got his fish, and not unfrequently two. One morning, unmindful of the rising of the river and the additional risks that this brought, he was so led on by the good fortune which had waited on his

[J. H. Stewart.

Photo by]

FORTINGALL BRIDGE AND HEAD OF PETER'S POOL.



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skill—he had already one fish—that he determined, in spite of all, to try for a second. The natural result followed. He was swept off his feet, and would certainly have been drowned had not stalwart Peter rushed in, grabbed him, and brought him triumphantly to bank. So, where there might have been tears, there was but laughter, and, perhaps, a sufficient warning.

The favourite spot is in the stream that sets off from the projecting rock. Do not stand on the rock, but keep up-stream and cast across, allowing your bait to sink by paying out line—it is very deep—and, as it trundles across, keep the bait on the spin by a movement of the rod until it is quite at the rock; then draw gently back, and, if there be no response, repeat the experiment. No matter the state of the river Peter's Pool will always give you a chance of success. Even when in high flood you may get one from the eddy under the tree at the tail, where it is a common sight to see the fish demonstrate pleasure at their safe entry to Peter's Pool.

Fanny's Pool

is close by. This is a long straight run, deep and rocky in the centre, and it is from the deeps that your fish will come.

You must cast almost to the opposite bank, a long throw, and, as your bait leaves the centre, raise the point of your rod and draw more

quickly, or you will be amongst stones and have trouble to clear. When the river is high the fish lie much nearer the bank, and it is then that you have an easy task and a more promising chance.

The river on this side is here bounded by a meadow, and it is quite easy to cast a long line from the high, grassy bank; but let me warn you against the danger of standing too near the edge, as it is, in places, undermined, and will let you in, as it did Peter while he was lifting out a fish for Mr. Margetson. Peter's going under with his prize was funny and quaint, but Margetson's serious advice to Peter not to drown if he could help it, but on no account to lose the fish, nearly caused a fit to an unseen onlooker.

A quarter of a mile farther down you come to the

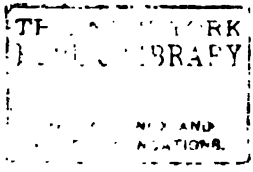
BROOM POOL,

which is quite a favourite of mine. You can fish here with the perfect assurance that more than one fish will see your bait. To the fisherman who has come here for the first time it presents far more possibilities for the losing of tackle than for the catching of fish, and could one but gather up all that has been lost in this pool quite a store of all kinds of lures would result.

Rocks and boulders are side by side, some of which are high up, and a knowledge of their where-

PETER GAFFING A FISH FOR CAPTAIN GRAHAM, BROOM POOL.

PETER RETURNING LOADED.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abouts is desirable, that your temper may remain unruffled. Let Peter show you how to fish here, and if, as may well happen, he should get hung up and become excited, fear not; he will express his views in Gaelic.

When you have a thorough knowledge of this long pool and have had many successes therein, it will be a favourite with you also.

This beat extends for another two miles down stream, and you have the opportunity of fishing the Plantation Pool, Ferry Pool, and the Minister's Pool, described by me from the opposite side.

There are a number of huge stones in the dale here with which no one ventures to interfere, as each has its tradition, in some cases sacred.

One of them was the lifting-stone that every man had to raise in his hands before he was permitted to join the bodyguard of his chieftain. I have not heard of Peter's attempting the task, but I do know that his rod is nearly twice as long as mine, and of such a weight that it would cripple me in an hour.

I saw Peter on my arrival, and he was sad of speech and momentarily expecting news of fatal import with regard to his son who was at the war, stricken down by enteric. "I canna fush, Mr. Geen, I'll gang back," and with this he turned for home, and I noticed that he gave his nose attention with finger and thumb that I might see it was no tear that moistened it.

It is safe to say that there was greater excitement in this little village about the war than in any other of its size throughout Perthshire. The patriotic and untiring energy of his Grace the Duke of Atholl, together with his sending out his three sons, had so roused the young and capable that the going out, and being wounded, coming home and recovering, was the sure prelude to anxiety to start again. There was one such send-off in my presence, and I shall not soon forget the hand-gripping by the men and the kissing by the women.

I thought when I left home on that Jan. 14 that war would soon be a forgotten word, yet, on leaving my sleeping-berth for a smoke, as we left Euston, I came face to face with a man who was leaving his berth for the same purpose, and, the first words having been of the King's opening of Parliament, to be present at which my companion had travelled from the north of Scotland, we talked of the war.

In the morning I was in the lobby of the carriage, and had read *The Scotsman* before he appeared. When he came in I offered him the paper, and, seeing that he turned eagerly to the casualty list, I ventured to express a hope that he had no wounded friends at the front; to which he replied, "I am thankful to say, 'No,' but my only three sons are out at the war."

When we reached Perth, thirty-five minutes late,

I expected that the Highland train would have started, but was pleased to find it waiting. At our door stood the station-master to usher, as I found, my so-far companion to a carriage of the train which was to carry me also to my destination. I was proceeding to a "smoker" when he beckoned to me, and asked me why I was deserting him. How fortunate it was for me that it was known that his Grace would be travelling in that train!

After passing Dunkeld I am quite familiar with all the salmon pools as far as to the place where the Tummel joins, but not so familiar with them as my fellow-traveller was.

At Ballinluig, where I had to change, my parting words were, "I wish you good morning, and I hope that your three sons may return to you safe and sound." To which he replied, "And may you, sir, enjoy good sport in Glen Lyon."

CHAPTER V.

YELLOW-STONE POOL—CAIRN POOL—LITTLE LADDER POOL—LONG LADDER POOL—THE FALLS.

We have now to come back to the right bank and start up stream; but first let me introduce you to Hugh MacLennan, the keeper, who may be seen holding a fish in the spot at which it was gaffed for Mr. C. W. Berry, of Edinburgh, who frequently fishes the Lyon, and to whom I am indebted for this and other pictures of the fishing.

The pools in Hugh's beat that are down stream on this side I have already sufficiently described, but I should like to add, before going on up, that I am just as much in love with Broom Pool from this side as from the other. Indeed, when the river is at all high, I much prefer it, as one can more easily fish it, and the chances with such a water are greater. Then, too, it affords the longest stretch of continuous fishing, where every yard is good.

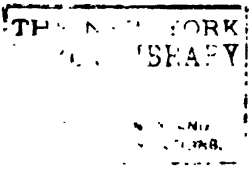
Peter's Pool from this side is pure vexation, so

Photo by] [*J. H. Stewart.*

START HERE TO FISH CAIRN POOL.

Photo by] [*C. W. Berry.*

THE FALLS IN PLY—KEEPER HUGH MACLENNAN.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come along, as a few hundreds of yards higher up you arrive at the

YELLOW-STONE POOL,

which, if in ply, is a very desirable chance. The fish often come from amongst the big stones quite above the pool, but you must cast a long line and be prepared to draw in quickly as soon as the bait passes the centre of the stream. As you get to the deeper water below you can fish to your fancy, as there is depth close in. Within a few yards of the seething caused by the yellow stone, visible when not in ply, you have most reason to be expectant, as it is there that the fish generally take; but I have, more than once, got them much lower down.

Having found the Yellow-Stone favourable, you may be sure that the next is also to your liking. It is at the foot of the big cairn, and is hence called

CAIRN POOL.

It may appear a strange fancy but my gillie always held that there exists a great jealousy between the Cairn and the Yellow-Stone. He used to aver that, if one of these two pools gives a salmon, the other, if it fails to be equally generous, looks quite off-colour, and will probably make matters level on the following day.

Strange as the fancy may appear the results of my numerous efforts bear strong testimony to its correctness.

The spot at which to commence to fish is at the foot of the second cairn some fifty yards higher up. On looking to the opposite bank you will see a wire fence running down to the water. Throw straight for it and about three-quarters of the way across; then you will just miss the high stones, one of which is shown appearing above water in the photo.

It is behind these that the fish are sheltering from the full force of the stream. Make several casts here, and then search each yard down until your bait is opposite the other cairn, where you should again make several casts; and then on, foot by foot, until you reach the fir-trees that are at the edge of the river.

I have spoken of fishing deep, and have given my reasons for so doing, but it will be well to remember, here and everywhere in the Lyon, that it is better to be spinning too high than too low, as stones and rocks are everywhere.

The opposite bank was the property of Mr. Stewart Menzies, the Laird of Chesthill, whom I have often seen in his picturesque Highland costume, wielding his fly-rod and cleverly avoiding the many obstacles growing on the high bank. He never would try the minnow, preferring, even in January, to take his chance with a fly.

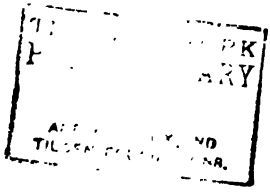

Photo by] LITTLE-LADDER IN PLY. [C. W. Berry.

HEAD-KEEPER FORD.

Sir Donald Currie has recently purchased the Chesthill Estate, which adjoins his Glenlyon and Garth estates, thus extending his fishing rights for many miles farther up the Glen. These fishing rights he has given to his tenant of the Fortingall Hotel for the use of visitors. Sir Donald has decided that the keepers shall no longer be allowed to fish, so those who thought they had reason to complain of their doing so have had their objection removed; and, in addition, there are now miles more of water over which they can roam after the coveted salmon, or the weighty trout of the River Lyon.

The Little-Ladder Pool.

The little ladder which gives this pool its name, takes you down the face of the rock some ten feet and lands you on a half-round ledge where there is just room to stand; and, when there, you have the appearance of exactly fitting in with Nature's intentions, filling a void.

The rather giddy height from which you are to fish has peculiar effects on some people, one instance of which will be sufficient, although I could relate many.

The fisherman followed his gillie to the top of the ladder and backed down without the slightest hesitation, in a manner which implied—oh, this is nothing to me; but when he turned round and caught sight of the water some thirty feet imme-

tarry. When at the bottom of the ladder you can easily approach the stream, where you will find yourself on a level with it, but conveniently hidden from the fish by a projecting rock, which in no way interferes with the fishing of the pool in any manner you may choose, as there is plenty of room for a good swing. It is easily fished, and a most likely spot when in ply, but you will require some skill to kill your fish when hooked, as there are two probabilities to be guarded against. The first is his getting up into the falls; that is likely to lose you tackle as well as fish; or he may go down and not stop even at the Little-Ladder, but on to the Cairn, and, as you cannot follow one yard, that is a certain loss. Your gillie, if as experienced and resourceful as MacLeish was, which is little likely, will stand above you, stones in hand, and keep him from the falls, but he cannot aid you in the case of his going down. So be rough on him, especially rough when he is going from you. I have killed several fine fish here, and, as yet, with unbroken luck.

On one occasion, while I was fishing here, MacLeish caused me, under peculiar circumstances, to offer a fish so many baits that I felt sure at the time that the salmon had been, if ever salmon was, worried into making a snap, as a dog might. However, you shall have an opportunity of judging for yourself.

Mac had ascended the ladder for my bag, and,

while coming down again, he saw a fish come from the dark water behind a boulder, so he called down to me to make the same cast again, and again he saw the fish come. He said that the reason the fish had not taken my bait was because it could not do so, as it no sooner saw it than it was over the next big stone, and the only plan was to get the minnow to cross the spot slowly. I was then standing as high up stream as I could, with perpendicular rock at my right shoulder. What could be done? Mac knew, and said "Stand there," pointing to three feet of icy water. I shook my head, and his reply was "Gie me a hand, sir, and I ken we'll hae the fush yet." We worked until my back ached, and Mac's face was a sight that did him credit. At last the work was completed, with a flat coping, and I had dry stones to stand on. "Now, sir, you'll have um." I tried my best, and Mac was up the ladder to watch the result, but nothing came of it. Mac scratched his head and suggested lunch, and, while he was eating, he was sorting over my minnows, and selected one with opposite colours to those of the bait already tried. This proved equally useless, as did the next, and the next. "Put you on that, sir, and I hae done wi' it." It was a good bait once, but it had had its day, and so I smiled as I put it on. I always did as Mac told me, sometimes in faith, sometimes in deference to his skill and experience and never-flagging anxiety for my success. He was right this

time. The fish took, and we killed. I say "we," but the village would always guess that Mac was at the bottom of my luck, and that without him I should be "a wee nobody at the fushing."

You will regret, as hundreds have done, that there is no passage from this to the next pool except for Hugh MacLennan, who loves to leap and scramble where others dare not. He pays for his daring now and again, and has to confess that the leap to his favourite stone from which he likes to fish the falls has caused him a ducking more than once. I don't like that leap, and I liked it less on the day that I was induced to make it with the aid of a pole. I shall not dwell on what happened, but I may say that the pole has been discarded, and that a short plank now comes from its hiding-place to help me.

We must to the road, *viâ* the ladder, walk some three score yards, go over the wall and descend again to the river.

The Falls

must be fished, as there you are again sure of either a fish or numerous refusals. I have often felt while here how greatly the pleasure of angling is enhanced by the sure knowledge that one's bait will be seen by numbers of grand fish.

Under such circumstances how carefully we scan and test our tackle, select our bait, and then, with

THE PASS OF GLEN LYON.

(Hugh MacLennan is to be seen fishing, having, on this occasion at any rate, successfully accomplished his difficult leap.)

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bended back and short-drawn breath, approach the sheltered spot from which the first, and sometimes fatal, cast is to be made. These are the moments that test our nerves immeasurably more than when the fish is struck and we are fighting the battle with tuned and stiffened frame.

A few such half-hours as you may spend here, momentarily expecting, should be sufficient to give vigorous circulation on the coldest day, fish or no fish. The satisfaction of having done our very best, as the reputation of the pool demanded, must frequently suffice if angling is to remain with us a true pleasure.

What cares the salmon fisher for failures? His mind runs not on the value of the fish and what it is costing him. It is to that glorious day, to that busy hour, and to that supreme twenty minutes, that his thoughts recur again and again.

Have you seen the fishers congregated in the lobby of the hotel on their return at the end of the day? That is your opportunity for discovering character. Give me for companion the man who, by his eyes and every muscle of his face, betrays the pleasure of his day spent in trying, and who, though unsuccessful, sees in the successes of others the pleasurable guarantee of sport for himself on the morrow.

CHAPTER VI.

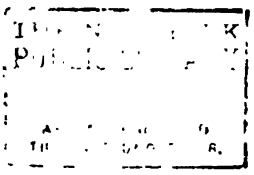
THE FALLS POOL—WHEN ARE POOLS IN PLY—ELM TREE POOL —MY GILLIE MACLEISH.

The Falls Pool.

This pool, as I have said, will be sure to have fish in it, as it is here that they congregate before negotiating the falls, which, natives say, they start to do with the beginning of February. I always try this pool from the shelter of its rocky side with one or two baits before I venture to show myself on the flat rock which stands high in mid-stream. To place yourself in such full view of the fish is so against the teachings of experience that it is impossible to be insensible to your seemingly ridiculous position; yet, strange to tell, it is from this standing-place that you will be most successful. It must be that the fish are harbouring behind shelving rocks which prevent their seeing you at this particular spot. When you hook a fish do not move, for you have more control over him here than from any other position, and you will need it. You must be rough, and continue rough to the end, as he must not be permitted to grope about the bottom or go down out of the pool. Know the

Photo by] [*C. W. Berry.*

THE FALLS AND THE POOL ABOVE.



strength of your tackle and use it as much as you dare, for the shorter the struggle the greater your chances of getting him to the gaff.

It is a pretty sight to see them leaping at the barrier, failing and falling back, then leaping again and succeeding. Their pleasure over their success is shown by a little skimming leap in the tail of the pool above, to which we will follow them.

Pool above the Falls.

The fish may have, from time to time, during their long or short stay in the pools below, seen many and various baits that sorely tempted them; baits that they have risen to, followed and altered their mind about, so many times that they had become indifferent to every allurement. Yet, having got over the Falls, they become as frisky and as easy to deceive as a fish fresh from the sea. So try you here, whenever the pool is in ply at the time of your passing.

When is a pool in ply?

This is a difficult question to answer off-hand, as I have more than once discovered. Mr Johnson, of Earl's Court Square, Kensington, for instance, who casts his bait far and almost as lightly as a fly, can fish a pool with chances of success that a less clever angler would not have; so, it may be in ply for one man and out of ply for another.

The river Tay was so low one day that the

anglers fishing from Fisher's Hotel, Pitlochry, determined that it was no use going out. I had a conversation with Mr. Fisher which resulted in my going to the Dunkeld beat, where, when I met the two boatmen, I was told that it would be useless to try to fish as there was really no stream.

A second's thought prompted me to say, "Ah, but you have not seen my new bait; it requires no stream; see here!" And, with that, I produced and spun with finger and thumb my Combination Spoon and Phantom, which, I knew, they could never have previously seen.

I showed them a flask, too, and told them of a wager I had made with Mr. Fisher that we three men could catch a salmon if any three could. These men practised only the one Tay method of harling, which consists of rowing the boat from side to side while she falls gently back to near the lie of the fish, while the baits are some thirty yards ahead, tossed and spun by the flowing water and the two long vibrating rods. I had only my little 16 oz. rod, with its ivory rings, of the use of which wee thing they had no knowledge and less faith. I saw that it was necessary to give confidence, so I boldly told them that, if they would kindly back the boat to within about thirty yards of a likely spot, I would show them a fish and what the wee rod could do with it.

It was soon evident that the men had given me the chance asked for, as I was into a fish that

caused them to say, "It's no' a kelt." Up and down the deep long pool it ran, sometimes with a rush that made the gillies, as they confessed afterwards, fear that my rod would snap or my thread-like line part; but no, I was in the middle of the stream, with plenty of water, and there was nothing but patience needed for the 20-pounder. During that day I got two other nice fish and quite a number of kelts.

When it was again my turn at Dunkeld the river was, to all men's minds, in beautiful ply, and we harled all day with minnow and fly over numbers of fish that showed themselves, but only kelts resulted.

So now we are as we were. When is a pool in ply? Many will answer, "When such or such a stone, or rock, or marked place is covered." They are, generally speaking, quite correct, and so must we leave the question.

The pool above the Falls is quite easily fished, and a look at its formation will prompt the method that should be pursued. I will only tell you to be on your guard against the efforts of a hooked fish to get back over the Falls.

Elm Tree Pool.

The head of this pool was one of the spots I had in mind when I wrote that there were places where "a salmon has to be killed or lost under the

point of the rod, for not a yard up nor down may you move."

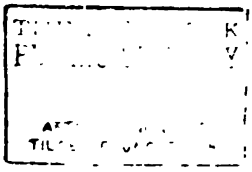
I have now a splendid opportunity of showing you a rod attempting the very task.

It often occurs that, between the hooking of a fish and his full realisation of being in danger, canny things may be done. Having struck, slacken your line, or rather hold on him as gently as with single hair, and then the fish, while mouthing the bait, will move gently here and there, and when he thus comes near you hold him tight with point of rod well down, that your line may help your rod. Give no line; prefer to let the point of the rod go down until the whole strain is on the line, and then he must turn in a circle or break, as he is quite unable to dig his toes in, as it were, for a start.

The first time that I hooked a fish while standing between these rocks he was off at full speed, and I had no choice, it being quite impossible to do more than to try to skid my winch. I could not even see, though I could guess, the direction he took. My remaining line was lessening fast when I appealed to Mac for advice. I was not to hold and break with the hope of saving something, but to let him run if he must until all the line was out, and then to quickly lower my rod that the strain might come on the fastening knot at the winch. It broke there as we expected, leaving us the bare chance—although the line was 100 yards long—of ever discovering it again.

Photo by] [*J. H. Stewart.*

AT THE HEAD OF THE ELM TREE.
(Killing a fish under the point of the rod.)



We were soon following the track it must have taken—stout Mac in front with rod, calling "bring the gaff wi' ye." Half-way down at the bend you see a jutting rock.

On this my gillie stretched himself, head foremost with eyes close to the water and heels in the air. How he prevented himself from slipping down into the deep water, while using one arm to beckon to me to hurry, was another revelation of Mac's powers of surprising me. "You're nae ower fast the day; gie I the gaff" was his greeting; to which I made no reply, as I was actually and stupidly expecting him to there and then gaff the fish.

He had hold of the line though, and what might that not lead to! Without a moment's thought I suggested following the line down. This gave MacLeish another opening. "You'll gang wie me west and no forget the rod." At such moments as these there was no doubt as to who was captain. The entanglements that Mac cleared, and the clever way in which he laid the line from stone to stone until the broken end was found, almost justified his sarcastic query, "And what would ye be after suggestin' the noo?"

We were soon winding the line and quickly down to the spot where it was found, and we got beyond it without further hitch until it pointed to the eddy where, we expected, the fish was.

He may have been there, but we had no

absolute proof—the line came in as slackly as before, and soon there came the lead, the wire and bait; and hope was dead.

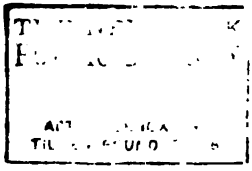
You must back out from the head and scramble over the intervening rocks. Then you are in the centre of the pool, well sheltered from the fish by the rock over which you came. While standing here you have the best of chances of hooking and following, but kill him where you stand, if possible, for a second fish may be got from the tail, where my gillie is seen standing.

On looking at the photo, "Elm Tree Pool," which I consider a remarkably faithful representation of the commencement of the pass, I think you will admit that it is a lovely place in which to get engaged with a fresh run fish of 34 lb. Such was once my luck. My big fish was good behaviour itself and gave me no trouble to speak of, and he proved as beautiful when laid on the rocks as he had been good on the hook. It will occur to some that the difficulties of killing a salmon increase in proportion to the weight of the fish. This is undoubtedly the case up to, say, 20 lb., after which weight has the opposite effect. The movements of big fish are slower, more even, and therefore much less dangerous, than those of a lively 16-pounder.

The water in the "Elm Tree" is very deep, but remember that the bottom is as rugged as the sides, so keep the nose of your fish well up, or he will bore down and entanglement will ensue.

Photo by] [*C. W. Berry.*

ELM-TREE POOL.



It may happen to you, as it has to me, that all your efforts to keep the fish in the pool will prove unavailing, and that he will go with a rush, mindful of old haunts, down stream. Should this be the case, follow until you stand on the last and highest rock at the tail, where you will have good footing in a position to keep your line clear of that high boulder which you see in mid-stream. When you are quite clear of this, slide down the rock, rod in right hand, leaving your left free to aid you in your difficult passage between, and sometimes over, the innumerable crags and stones that beset your journeying. Watch your footsteps, and go as slowly as your diminishing line permits, unless it be that you are less mindful of a fall than anxious for success in the struggle which you have in hand.

It will be a joyful and welcome moment if you should arrive without a severe bruise opposite the pool above the falls with tight line pointing towards the deep eddy, as it is there that the fish would make for, and with little added labour he should be yours. The taking of this fish you will always remember, and sometimes you may think it worth talking about.

Now I desire to introduce you to the photo of MacLeish, shoemaker to the village of Fortingall. It was a gladdening sight to see his smiling eyes and jolly, well-kept person. No one would have guessed his trade. A keener sportsman, a more

encouraging companion, I never met, and I regretted his death more than I shall say here. I do not quite remember how many years he fished with me, but to him is due much of the knowledge which I have gathered of Glenlyon. He was the son and grandson of great fishermen, who fished the glen and paid their tribute to the lairds in salmon. They had flies for every pool, and the hours for fishing them. With Mac, the last of his line, there was buried much that should have been written.

Sometimes this man was almost my sole companion for a month, without break, and I never once knew him out of temper or spirits. No mishap, nor even the loss of a fish when almost ready for gaffing, could ruffle him. Once only during my long stays here did he excuse himself from starting in the morning; and then it was not to commence mending the boots that filled his shop, but to kill a pig; and, in the meantime, he lent me the services of his nephew, who was to run for him if a fish came on.

The fish came and the boy ran, and, as he ran, called loudly. Mac heard the call, failed in his shot at the forehead of the pig—they shoot them here—and struck it in the lobe of the ear.

Mac ran, as few heavy men could or would run, and was with me just as the fish turned on his side at the edge of the rock. All was well and we were two happy men.

Photo by] [*J. H. Stewart.*

THE TAIL OF THE ELM TREE, MY GILLIE, MACLEISH, AND HIS LITTLE DOG.

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Turning the pig into pork was Mac's next duty, but, unfortunately for his peace of mind for many a long day, through the speering impertinence of gillies and keepers, the pig, taking advantage of the open gate, had wandered into the wood, and for ever after Mac was occasionally asked if he had yet stagged his pig.

I should not have told you this or what follows here had MacLeish been alive, because he extracted a promise, a solemn one, from me that it should be a secret between us. Death, alas! was soon to break the compact.

While I was eating my lunch he frequently took up my rod and made a cast or two, and one day, while doing this, he had the misfortune to almost lift his little terrier, which you see at his side, into the water with a phantom minnow. The hook was deeply embedded in the side of the poor little creature, and it ran off up through the trees, with stout Mac rushing after loudly calling in Gaelic and the winch making a screech that would at other times be music.

I laughed, I could not help it. At last he returned with the wee dog, and in a stern voice requested me to hold him while he cut out the hook. When this was done I saw that he was very pale and, I feared, much offended, so I expressed my regret at having been so foolish. His reply was, "I kenned weel ye would be laughing, and ye may juist laugh till you're a weary if so it be ye

canna help it, but promise me, ye maun, that ye'll ne'er crack on aboot it to the ithers."

All too soon am I relieved of that promise. Poor Mac has gone, and memories throng too quickly on me as I write, so I will rest awhile.

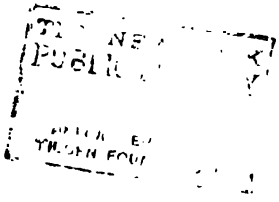


Photo by] [*J. H. Stewart*

THE PULPIT POOL. MY GILLIE, MACLEISH, FISHING.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PULPIT POOL—WATCHING THE SALMON—TEMPTING SHY FISH.

FISH love Glenlyon Pass with its narrow, deep and eddying pools, some of which are very deep and in which the water has burrowed far from sight underneath the rocks. Here the salmon dwell secure from frost and ice during the uncertain month of February, and it is sometimes well into March before they will finally leave these haunts to venture their journey to the broader and shallower pools above, by which time they are, perhaps, quite tired of minnow lures, but are ripe and ready victims awaiting the coming of the skilful fly fisher.

One of the great charms of the river is the ever-varying rotation in which it brings the different pools into ply. For instance, a spate that would cause a six foot rise in the pass and rob you of most, or, at any rate, many, of your chances here is sufficient to give only a lively swirl to the pools below.

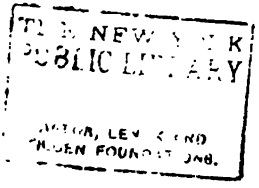
One peep at the river is enough for an old stager to decide him as to which way to face. If it

is very, very low, he will be off up the Glen to the Elm Tree, or to the Pulpit where the water is said to be as deep as in any pool between here and Perth. But, be the water high or low, we will go upwards to-day that I may show you the Pulpit. Have with you, ready to hand, a few pence to give in response to the appeal of the women gipsies whom we are likely to meet. You will get in return for each a smile and a curtsy, and if that does not satisfy you take a look at their men; notice their scornful unconsciousness of what is transpiring under their uplifted noses.

On seeing the Pulpit Pool you cannot help but wonder how many ages must have passed since first the river ran the course provided for it at the last great upheaval. You can easily see how changed it is from what it must have been, and you ask yourself what can have excavated the narrow channels to such a depth through solid rock. The sides look as though they had been pared by some huge cheese-cutter, pressed down to great depths by a Titan's hand. When the spate comes, you get your answer; the penny is in the slot, and the whole machine is put in motion. Innumerable stones are working, twirling and grooving, in innumerable holes, and the grit that comes from these rough lathes of Nature goes washing down to fulfil its mission elsewhere. And so the work goes on, slowly, yet surely; so slowly that no one lives to note its progress.

Photo by] [*J. H. Stewart.*

A WEE BIT OF THE LOVELY ROAD THAT FAITHFULLY FOLLOWS THE RIVER FROM ITS RISE TO ITS FALL.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Having obtained from the photo an outline of the pool, look again to see my gillie standing to show you where he and others stand to fish. It is not over easy to find Mac in the photo which I have before me, and, perhaps, it will be more difficult to do so in the reproduction; but try, please, for he is there, in the pulpit, whence this pool is so aptly named, and whence it can most easily be fished. So easy, indeed, is its fishing from here, and so secure the position, that it is to this spot that the gouty man's chair could be brought, for, verily, he shall as easily fish here as in the tub in his room.

You can sit and pay your bait down the rushing off-side and bring it back between the eddy and the stream, then down and back, searching a little more of the eddy; and yet again, exploring close to the rock on the near side.

From the high overhanging rocks on the left of the fisherman, your gillie, or yourself, if another is working the rod, may, at times, learn much of the movements of salmon when they are under the influence of temptation.

In February this spot may be said to be full of waiting fish, and they must all see your bait, excepting those that are deep in the tunnel, and, should they demonstrate by movements, as I have seen them do, the various effects produced on them by a spinning lure or a Jock Scott, you have the valuable opportunity of peeping straight down

on them and witnessing all their tricks. Quite suddenly a flash will illumine the dark water and attract your eye, only to disappear, perhaps, before you have outlined the cause. The most that you can say of it is, "Surely that must have been a fish." The next may be a bolder one or more inquisitive, more playful, in a greater temper, or a really hungry fish. The bolder fish will come up and follow the bait for yards, time after time, just to prove to himself, or to his comrades, how easily he "could an he would;" or it may be that he is merely anxious to see more closely the curiosity that you are offering to him.

I deeply sympathise with the playful fish that never meant anything but just to give your fly a flap with his tail and gets hooked by that appendage. Fancy his disadvantage! Useless it is for him, at any rate, to open his mouth and shake his head, or to try that nasty jag, jag, that some salmon indulge in as they go about the bottom. He cannot even rub his nose at a profit.

Yes, I am really sorry for the salmon that gets hooked when he meant only a bit of fun, and, if he be quite a fresh-run fish and over 20 lb. in weight, perhaps one ought to put him back.

> "'I weep for you,' the walrus said,
> 'I deeply sympathise.'
> With sobs and tears he sorted out
> Those of the larger size."

Ford had one thus hooked, soon after this

season's opening. He told me "the fish was only trying to drown the minnow." However, the fish gave him so much fun that he had not the heart to put him back and have a try for his other end.

When the hungry fish moves, his flash will instantly develop into shape and wide-open mouth that closes on the lure, and then, with another flash of his silvery side, he will disappear again into the depths.

Then there are the coy, shy, undecided fish, which deserve consideration, as you may readily learn while watching from this spot. The hungry you may take by storm, but the others must be laid siege to.

To the shy we will offer all we have, and refuse to take their "no," preferring to persevere even to obstinacy, knowing full well that the most coy will at some time be willing, and that the undecided may be shown something that will determine their fate.

I have proved to my own satisfaction, more than once, that while a fish may have repeatedly refused a particular bait spun over him in the recognised orthodox manner by the best of fishers, he has fallen an easy prey to the same bait cutting capers at the instance of some novice. An amusing example of this I give in the next chapter.

Experience teaches that in fishing, as in other matters, the utmost should be made of our opportunities. To do so, we must first endeavour to

comprehend the possibilities that the particular opportunity offers, and then set to work in such a manner as is likely to bring the greatest reward for our careful handling of what should be profitable moments.

I will now tell you in precise terms how I fish the Pulpit Pool. It does not follow that, because it is easy to fish, the easiest way is therefore the best.

I never could submit to fish from the raised platform on which my gillie stands, as, although the fish cannot see you while they are at the bottom, they have plenty of opportunity of so doing when up and following your bait, and this may lead to a refusal at the last moment.

In the rock which forms the floor of the pulpit there was a little hole or crevice into which, some hundreds of years ago, there came a stone or stones, with the result that the twirling during high water has worked a round hole of just sufficient size to hold and hide me to just above the waist. I slide down into this, and am then conveniently and comfortably positioned to do something more than merely pay down one side and back the other.

While I am in this position, the water is rushing down on my extreme right, and eddying back on my left to enter the tunnel underneath the place where I am ensconced. When you are here your first and most careful attention should be given to

this tit-bit, which may be done by a backward swing of the rod and a loosening of the line at the end of the swing. Let the lure sink—there is great depth—then make draws of a foot at a time, letting back after each draw about six inches, using your top joint to accentuate the rise, the fall and the spinning of the bait.

Try another bait before flashing your rod over the water; a variation in size, merely, is sometimes as effective as a change from artificial to natural. Having done all you can, without success, proceed to search the next nearest portion, by casting your bait to your right, and bringing it gently over the stream to your left, first with a regular draw, and next with such a draw that half of the line taken is allowed to slide back again through the rings.

Search half the pool in this way, and then change your bait and repeat your efforts over the same ground. Next do the other half with like care, when surely your labour will be rewarded, even though it be not until you are quite at the tail, not only of the pool, but also of your perseverance. I will now tell you how to deal with a Pulpit hooked fish.

I know of no other spot where a salmon is so long in realising that he has a battle before him. He will lie at the bottom with such pertinacity, notwithstanding a great strain, that doubts will arise in your mind as to whether you are still holding to a fish, and when at last he moves it will

be so slowly that your thoughts will fly from the fear of his being round a rock to the idea of a mighty fish, which shall, in size, more than equal your wildest dream.

He will presently move in earnest. You should be fully ready for his rushes and leaps that will assuredly come from him in his circumscribed habitation. Be especially on your guard for his cocksure run under your feet to the tunnel, through which he will pass to jump and splash in the spout-like river at your back. The point of your rod should be down almost level with the water, and bending slightly with a tender feel that as little friction as possible may result from the grating of your line along the roof.

Have no anxiety, he must return, and will do so all the quicker for your not pulling on him. It is his turn now to have his way, but it will be yours when he comes back to the open and is under your rod. Remember then that an uplifed rod cannot break your tackle, and that the greater the strain the quicker the issue, thereby lessening the risks of his managing to leave by the other end and going down stream, whence there would be but little hope of his coming back.

When your fish is so nearly ready for the gaff that there is no fear of further rushes, but has still life enough to stem the current, you must ascend the high rock and stand there in such a position as will best enable you to bring him to the spur of

rock which is shown in the photo, where your gillie will be waiting to relieve you of further anxiety by successfully gaffing him.

I will hope that you may be thus fortunate in, possibly, your first effort in a pulpit, and that your first success may be followed by a second, and that so you may be like the naughty little boy whom I met early one morning as I was going fishing down south, and who was whistling merrily.

I ventured to remark to him that he had been lucky to find such a fine whistle so early in the morning. "Ay," said he, "I be a lucky chap, I be. I've been lucky twice this marning; virst I vound a whistle and now I've vound a vool to listen to 'un."

A day, or part of a day, spent at this spot, seeing what I have seen, causes me to make careful mental notes so as to be able to classify my efforts and judge when all possible has been done to delude, not only the hungry, but also the coy, the shy and the undecided.

To be a successful salmon fisher you must first catch patience, and next bear in mind that at the very root of the first principles of the art lies the necessity of showing the bait to the fish while keeping the attachments thereto quite unseen by them.

CHAPTER VIII.

IRON-WELL POOL—SULKING POOL—AUKMORE POOL—THE WEAVER'S POOL.

In the last chapter I wrote "I have proved to my own satisfaction more than once that, while a fish may have repeatedly refused a particular bait spun over him in the recognised manner by the best of fishers, he has fallen an easy prey to the same bait cutting capers at the instance of some novice."

One day, when the Lyon was impossible through frost, I wired Mr. Stewart, the host of Ben Lawers Hotel, "Have a boat ready for me by ten to-day."

As it happened, the regular boatmen were already out, and I had to be content with two farm labourers, whose efforts with the boat were really most comical.

At first I saw only this funny side of the performance, and enjoyed it as such, but in a short time its monotony became tiresome, and my nerves were irritably affected by the prospect of spending a whole day in being propelled here and there by

two absolutely stupid fellows. The only redeeming feature of the position was the security I felt that there would be no witnesses to my discomfort.

This thought had scarcely time to ease my worry when, on turning round, I saw that MacColl, the head boatman from Kenmore, with whom I have often fished, and who is a splendid even rower for harling, as it is practised in Loch Tay, was coming along in our track, if such it might be called. I tried my best to get my men to put in a respectable stroke, but the more I talked the more flustered they became and the higher their blades were lifted, to go chop, chop! splash, splash! first on one side and then on the other.

MacColl and Sandy MacLaren were fast overhauling us, and I could just make out who the gentleman was who was fishing with them. The recognition of the third figure that formed the complement of a talented boat added no little measure to my cup of misery.

I determined on a wide turn at the point just ahead, where the boats often went about. This would give the boat following an opportunity of passing, without their knowing my motives for wishing to keep such a distance between us. This ruse did not answer, and it was really stupid of me to expect a show like mine to escape notice. My friend, I found, had no fish; so there, at any rate, I was equal with him. Compliments were paid me on my "unique turn out," of which my boatmen

heard nothing, as they were listening with all ears to MacColl's Gaelic, which was causing them to wince, redden, and pale in turns.

I was not over-proud of my show, except that it was my show, and the men my men; and my back rose at their changing colours until I really hungered that somehow they might come to have the last laugh.

Chop, chop! splash, splash! went the oars as we turned our boat on the other proud vessel. What care I now for chops and splashes? The fellows are doing their best—oh! but it was a poor best, and, as I looked round towards my rods to see if I could find inspiration there, I saw the top-joints giving an exaggerated representation of the first-one-and-then-the-other rowing.

What on earth, then, could the spinning of the baits be like?

I thought for a moment or two, and then I said, "Men, we are going to catch a salmon." I certainly expected that the suddenness of the announcement and the confidence of the tone, coming so immediately after such a trying time, would be a surprise, but I did not expect them to stop rowing and fail to start again until I had told them how I knew. In the meantime both baits had sunk to the rocks, and when the boat began to move again, both winches gave loud notice of obstructed lines. At this, stroke-oar opened his mouth and put out his tongue, but bow fairly

jumped up to peer over his mate's shoulder, in doing which he dropped his paddle.

At last we are off again, and I am directing my men to keep well out at the point we are nearing, as it is rather shallow there.

Just then one of the rods shook, the stone that was on the line fell down, and the winch began paying in answer to a fish that was leaping at the end of seventy yards of line. I would give almost anything for a snapshot of the faces of those two men as they heard the commotion and saw the fish leap. Their eyes and tongues were almost on their faces, and so they sat and stared until I thought of the other rod, which should, long before, have been wound in.

After landing the fish—23 lb.—I gave the order to go back over the same ground, as my men might like, I thought, to speak to MacColl. This soon brought us near the other boat, which was trying round a fish which had risen. My friend told me this, and suggested, with a laugh, that I should give it a turn and then land for lunch. We proceeded to execute this manœuvre, which consists in bringing your baits over the fish without the boat's passing too near.

I had told my men not to speak just yet of our having a fish, but this did not prevent their getting from MacColl the fact that our rivals were still fishless.

Now this was unfortunate, for it caused my crew

to sit so strangely tall that their rowing was worse than ever, and our manœuvring round the fish was so ridiculous a sight that the laughter of my friend and his gillies was quite pardonable; indeed, I was laughing myself.

But, as I picked up one of the rods to wind in, my laughter was checked by the rod's giving a sudden dip and the winch handle's being twisted from my hold.

So we three laughing-stocks got our second fish. My friend, MacColl and MacLaren, were surprised to see that our bait was a Blue Phantom, the same as they had on one of their rods, and they were still more surprised to see that this was our second fish.

Both had evidently refused a particular bait spun over them by the best of fishers, and had then fallen easy prey to the same bait cutting capers at the instance of two ploughmen.

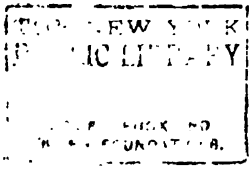
IRON-WELL POOL

only the head of which is shown in the photo, is basin-shaped with large stones and rocks at the bottom; many of the latter with such deep shelves that fish and fishermen are effectually screened from each other.

Bring with you here, and everywhere, after this time—that is, after February—your fly fishing

Photo by] *J. H. Stewart*

HEAD OF IRON-WELL POOL WITH SULKING POOL BEYOND.



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equipment, so that you may first try with the less-disturbing method of tempting them.

One of your chances is at the top where the water enters from the spout-like neck, to fish which you should descend the slanting rock until you are almost level with the water, where you will find fair footing, for then a rising fish is less likely to see you.

To fish the tail you stand behind the low rock that juts into the water about half-way down. No instructions are needed as to the playing of a fish as he cannot leave the pool, but I would advise that his head be kept as high as may be possible, for the sharp rocks are as sharp as rocks can be.

Sulking Pool

is a much longer and broader affair, about two hundred yards farther up. You need waders to reach the fish which are lying behind the large stones in the tail during April and May, but at the head, and in the long, deep neck, you have a splendid chance with either fly or minnow. Notice that, when you are here, you are in a somewhat elevated position and in full view of the fish. Therefore, you must cast from well up stream, against which the fish's vision does not penetrate far.

It is two years since I fished this pool, and then

it was a fellow-townsman of mine, Mr. Campbell, of Richmond, who made the successful effort.

I cannot refrain from saying that he took his fresh-run spring fish with an undressed silk line, so fine as to be only equal to those generally used for roach and dace fishing in the Thames.

That the landing of this fish with such tackle was no fluke was proved over and over again when we met soon after at Pitlochry and fished the same beat on the Tay, there being no other vacant, he wading and I from the boat.

When necessary he would wade almost to his arm-pits, and then make such a cast with his fine line from a Malloch winch as to quite astonish me; his playing of a fish was a combination of skill and gentleness not easily to be equalled, and impossible to surpass. Mr. Campbell almost loves his winch, as may be inferred from the following:—"I like your method, Geen, which does not call for any tiresome bending of the back with its attendant strain on the hips, and am almost persuaded. But I don't think that I could give up my Malloch."

Aukmoke Pool

is some quarter of a mile farther, and is well worth a visit now that you are so near, for after the middle of March you may be sure of there being fish in it. Remembering how few times I have fished it, and that, none the less, I have had more

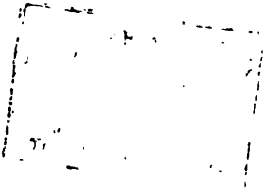


Photo by] [*J. H. Stewart.*

"THE BURNS, TOO, IN THEIR CLAMOURING HASTE MADE HARMONIOUS MUSIC FROM EVERY QUARTER."

than one salmon from it, I am naturally glad to find myself behind the sheltering rocks on its bank, from which you can fish it quite easily in an attractive manner. Should you get him on, keep the point of your rod high, because the rocks in the bed of the river have edges so sharp that the stoutest gut has no chance should the two meet.

The Weaver's Pool

is very narrow, deep, and eddying. There are always fish here in April, May, and June, but it is not one of my lucky spots, as I have failed to land either of the two fish I have hooked in it. In both cases the fish disappeared in a deep hole under a rock, and, as I presumed, turned a corner, back round which nothing would bring them, and I had to break. In this the concluding chapter I should like to again refer to the day on which I caught the 34-pound fish in the Elm Tree Pool.

In the morning, life and movement were in every scene, and the river's aspect was eloquent at every turn to fishers who know its language to come and fish. On it went, fretting past the rocks, swirling through the deeps, eddying here and there as if glad to linger awhile, and then on to sing in its journey over the shallows. The burns, too, in their clamouring haste, made harmonious music from every quarter.

Amid such surroundings the bait was cast on

this last morning, when, without delay, the river fulfilled its promise. The fish was on, and the sport for kings was mine. The issue of this pleasure you already know.

Then I rested, smoked my pipe, and listened to the music of the many falling waters as others do to the songs of birds, and even while I stood thus listening the air grew icy-cold, and the sounds grew less and less.

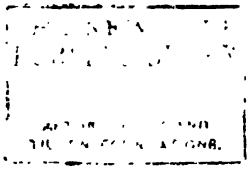
A frost was on the hills, and a biting wind was creeping down the mountain side, freezing, whitening, beautifying, and transforming everything within its grip.

As the river fell, it left a frozen trail, from which innumerable icicles grew downwards, gathering length and substance from the lapping water, and its further falling gradually exposed tiers of shelving rock to the freezing air, on which bands of ice came out to form the heads of fringes that soon bedecked the river's course.

In the sunken current great floes were passing down that presently joined to make the bars that kept the stream enchained, and thus made fast prisoners of the sagacious and well-housed fish. Fantastic icy ribbons replaced the tumbling burns that streaked the lofty sides of the overshadowing hills. Then came the snow, on which the waiting wind hurriedly pounced to build what more was needed to complete a wondrous transformation scene.

Photo by] *[J. H. Stewart.*

"THEN I RESTED, SMOKED MY PIPE, AND LISTENED TO THE MUSIC OF THE MANY FALLING WATERS."



The Lyon rises near Ben Cruachan, with Ben Lawers on the south, and mighty Schiehallion on the north. No one, I think, but certainly not poor I, can pretend to adequately describe the grandeur of the mountainous regions through which this river flows, the music it makes, or the feelings which it engenders.

At the head of the Glen is Loch Lyon, the property of the Marquis of Breadalbane, on the one side, and of the trustees of the late Mr. Bullough, of Meggernie Castle, on the other. Permission to fish must first be obtained from one or other of the owners. Being so provided you may reasonably expect good sport with the trout, for which try a red hackle, but the salmon are an off-chance.

The river flows for forty miles before falling into the Tay about three miles above Aberfeldy. How the seasons and lures vary for each portion of it I will proceed to tell you.

From the opening day to the middle of February the fish are in the lower reaches of the river—that is, below the Falls Pool at Fortingall; after that date they are some three miles farther up, and by April 1, when the fly should supersede all other baits, they may be found in the whole of the water (eleven miles) that can be fished from the Fortingall Hotel.

By the end of July there is scarcely a pool that has not its tenants, and during August and September there are bends and falls in the river

at Meggernie that are alive with salmon and grilse which afford wonderful sport to those lucky enough to gain permission of the owners, the trustees of the late Mr. Bullough. The falls at Meggernie are worth a long day's walk to see, especially when they are in flood and the fish are in the mood to surmount them; then to all beholders they are truly grand.

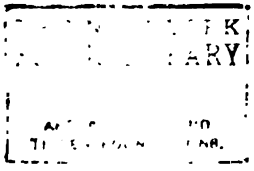
I would advise that your equipment should include both a salmon and a grilse rod, for much of the river can be fished with the latter with ease and safety, while other portions need both a stronger rod and the strongest tackle. Have a Dusty Miller, a Wasp, Blue Doctor, Silver Doctor, a Butcher, and, of course, a Jock Scott, all on No. 6 hooks.

Trout-fishers should have a happy time at Fortingall. The hotel is well-managed and the young proprietor a most obliging man. Some portions of the river broaden out so considerably that boats are necessary, but these are provided free of charge. I mention this because a friend of mine who fishes Loch Leven, and who is a piscatorial mathematician of the first water, informs me that the cost of boats alone on that loch works out at four shillings for every pound weight caught.

With a rod that fits you and the following flies—Hare's Lug, Greenwell's Glory, Malloch's Favourite, and Skin-the-Goat until June; and then

FORTINGALL HOTEL.

FAR UP THE GLEN.



Blue Dun, Butcher, Zulu, Partridge, Spider, and Coch-y-Bondhu for the rest of the season—you should have a rare time with the unsophisticated trout, which grow to over 3 lb. Such are the trout-fishers' chances over eleven miles of water, in the loveliest glen of lovely Perthshire.

CHAPTER IX.

LOCH NESS.

FREE SALMON FISHING—A GRAND TROUT—HARLING—AN UPSET.

As my fishing friends know only too well, I am totally unable to keep secret any discoveries I, or they, may make in connection with the possibility of capturing spring salmon at anything below a ruinous price. I am growing old, and I suppose that is allowed to account for my foolishness. My friends do not really throw me over, or do half the things they threaten in such loud tones; they still put up with me and all my faults.

How many am I about to offend just a little in letting all and sundry know of my latest discovery? Well, what is it? It is no less than a spring salmon fishing absolutely free, and within a day's march by rail, of London town. Where is the wee bit river Lyon now? Yes, absolutely free is my newly-discovered fishing.

I am so far fortunate that I need not consider the feelings of the friend who first took me there to fish, since he has, of his own accord, materially

assisted me with many of the figures necessary for this chapter. "Look here, Geen, you have introduced me to more than one good thing. Will you, for once, permit me to pioneer, and will you promise to be as patient with me, if it is not a success, as I have been with you during some of your terrible frosts?" My reply to this query ended in our meeting a few days after at Euston for a night journey *viâ* the West Coast route to Inverness. He, mindful of his new *rôle*, visited me in my berth soon after the train had started, and insisted on inspecting my tackle-cases, fearing, as he said, that he might find it necessary to supplement what I had with some of his, so that our chances of success might be equal. My box of Geen-swivelled phantoms met with his approval at first sight, but on closer inspection he found it necessary to fetch his and make sundry exchanges, by which I got representations of several fish quite unknown to me, which he considered much more deadly than my No. 7 parrs, with their silver bellies, slate sides, and delicate green bars. My chars, too, shaded from the most delicate pink to the brightest red, with vermilion and black spots of varying sizes dotted here and there, were, to his mind, quite out of date when compared with some of his new ideas, self painted, which he fairly lavished on me.

To grow old and fail to keep pace with the times, in matters piscatorial, is really a small

matter, provided you have a friend who will volunteer to read you up. In my aged innocence I thought my fine dark blue silk harling lines perfection, but it is not so: rather thick, light brown lines are, it seems, much better; and both my blues would have gone in exchange had I not protested that the advantage would have been all mine had he given me both of his browns for my blues. Winches that run silently out when the check is off struck his fancy, but he was not quite sure they were as good as his that required pulling at with a vigorous stroke, and which gave back a responding squeal. However, he would try one, and after a few days' fishing we could compare notes. Geen's leads and wire traces he knew something of, but unfortunately had none with him. This being satisfactorily adjusted, I suggested bed, whereupon he very kindly offered the opinion that I was now very fairly equipped. Of course I thanked him from my heart when saying good-night, or, rather, good-morning—we were travelling by the 11.50 P.M. express.

To leave dull, enervating London, as it is in the early new year, for the exhilarating rush of a L. and N. W. R. train as it speeds to the North and the fishings is a tonic to me that is worth many times its cost. I am soon asleep, and intermingled with dreams of running waters and leaping fish are half-conscious moments, made at last wholly conscious by callings of my name by my friend,

which I cannot at first imagine are for anything but the gaff, but which turn out to be a request for me to look out and see the red deer.

I find we are at the highest point traversed by the Highland Railway between Perth and Inverness. Snow has lain thick here for some months, notwithstanding the south winds, and is quite deep on the higher hills, and in consequence the hungry deer are searching for the grass where the snow is thinnest, quite unheedful of the train. The deer absorbed sight and thought for a moment, and then the grandeur of the scene broke the spell, and we were confronted with the wonderful effects that may come from hills and glens together with snow and sunshine. The larch plantings are rich brown fur rugs with silvery hairs intermingled; the fir woods are mantles of green velvet stamped with irregular patterns of white; while the low-growing scrubby birch is everywhere in patches showing up every possible shade of mystic grey.

The fresh, sweet air, fragrant with a mellow blend of larch and heather, that rushes in at the opened window, is a fitting greeting—a joyful, passionate welcome, if ever grand Nature does welcome "vile" man to her glorious scenes.

> "What though the spicy breezes
> Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle,
> Though every prospect pleases
> And only man is vile."

The crisp morning air, the lovely outlook, the speed

draws near the pier the hotel may be seen high up on the tree-clad mountain side. On the pier is the host, Mr. Sam Tilston, whom I knew some twenty-five or more years ago at another fishing not far from Glen Lyon.

Loch Ness is, I believe, the deepest loch in Scotland, and consequently its water never approaches, even during the most intense frosts, anything like freezing point. In the year 1807, when the thermometer at Inverness was 40 degrees below freezing point, it made no impression upon the loch or river.

Mr. William Scope, a great authority, says in his "Days and Nights of Salmon Fishing," that "the Ness is the forwardest river in Scotland," and Mr. Alexander Fraser, in his evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1825, said the Ness was always privileged earlier than any other river, and that the fish taken in December and January were far the most valuable and constituted more than one half of the weight of the season's take from December to September. Is it not extraordinary that, notwithstanding this evidence, evidence borne out by the records of the fish taken during the nine years just prior to the inquiry, the river and loch should be closed to rods until such a late period as the 14th day of February, by which time, as I can personally vouch, the heavy fish that run up in December are much deteriorated both in quantity and quality?

The 1903 season's angling on the loch and the experiences of all those with whom I have spoken show that, were the season to commence, as it undoubtedly should, on January 1, the six weeks now lost would be of the best, incomparably the best, for this the admittedly earliest river and loch in Scotland.

On the opening day that season Mr. J. B. Wright had three salmon—20 lb., 20 lb., and 10 lb.; Mr. Malcolm four—25 lb., 14 lb., 11 lb., and 6 lb.; Miss Rankin two—25 lb. and 17 lb.; Mr. Fraser, one—25 lb.; Major Molyneux Steel, one—21 lb. These five fishers were from one station on the loch, and I can say that all the other stations were almost equally successful, and that, notwithstanding the tremendous storms that were experienced during the first fortnight, a larger number of fish were captured than in any other loch, although during the second week but very few boats ventured out. In this second week I got five large fish, two of which I would have much preferred to have captured six weeks earlier, and my friend had four large ones, one of which would have been better had he caught it in January.

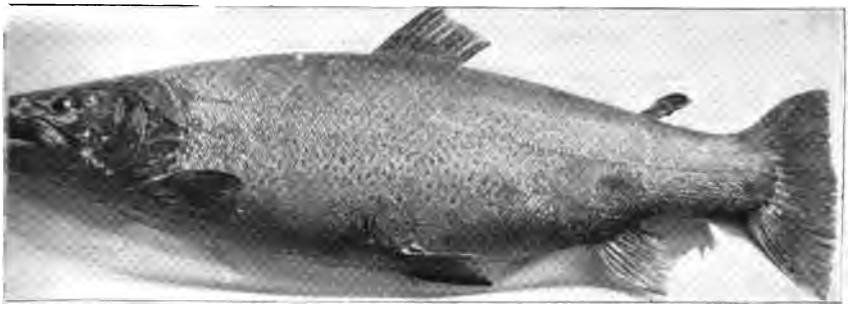
The run of grilse is very considerable, and much sport with them can be had in June and July by casting with a fly towards the shore, while a No. 6 minnow is slowly spun from the tail of the moving boat.

There are abundance of trout of several species,

which grow to a great size, and the brown trout are the prettiest and most plucky that I know of anywhere, and grow to an enormous size. I am the fortunate possessor of a perfect specimen which was captured by my friend Mr. Edward Ware, who, noticing my envious looks when the fish brought the scale down below 19 lb., said, "Why, Geen, old boy, I'd sooner give you the fish than see you look like that." I've got it. It is a perfect specimen in shape and colouring, splendidly put up by Messrs. Macleay and Son, of Inverness.

There are those who think that nothing profitable can be added to what has been already written about the sit-and-be-patient method of angling for salmon that is called "harling." The very pertinent fact of having to sit helplessly while your gillies seek for and hook the fish is the factor which causes the intelligent angler to ask himself if he has provided his fishermen with the best possible lures adjusted to the best and least visible lines and traces. I dare to assert that the orthodox two rods with lines paid out to varying lengths, and two baits with contrasted colour-blends, fall far short of what is needed to provide the maximum chance of success. Knowing this from long personal experience, I shall presume to give details of what constitute, in my opinion, the best trap or set of traps to increase the chances of sport and enhance the interest of the patiently-waiting sportsman.

The depth at which the baits should be spinning



19 LB. TROUT IN THE ROUGH AT THE TAXIDERMIST'S, MACLEAY'S, INVERNESS.

DONALD AND MALCOLM.

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is of the utmost importance, and so difficult to determine that the experiences of to-day may be no guide to the morrow's decision. It is very generally admitted that spring fish lie deep during the months of January and February, and that, to move them, baits must be sunk somewhat to their level. It may also be accepted as a fact that while they may rise and follow the first bait offered, they will often in their hesitation allow it to pass; then, regretting their indecision, fairly rush at the second offer. So much is this so that a boat following closely in the wake of another is frequently more successful than the leading one. With these data to help you how to work out the problem of what is best to be done to make your chances as great as possible, you will arrive at the conclusion that by fishing at three different depths instead of at two you will be doing your best in that direction, and will then be at liberty to consider how best to arrange your baits so as to give the salmon a chance to rise and refuse one of your baits and still be able to alter his mind in favour of another of them, which is some forty yards in the rear as yet.

You need two fourteen-feet rods with fine dark blue silk lines, a very small Geen's lead and 9 ft. of wire attached, first to the leads and then to the swivel of your bait. The rod near the shore should have out 50 yards, and the outer rod 70, with a slightly increased weight of lead.

In addition to this you should be provided with

a strong, pliable rod, only 6 ft. in length, the line from which should travel to the rear straight from the tail of the boat, with the winch and butt on the bottom boards near your feet. The trace on this should be more heavily weighted than either of the others, so as to sink it at least 10 ft. with only 25 yards of line out. The rod I use for this purpose was long since christened "lucky Judy," and now the friend who so named it has a similar one, which he calls his "lucky riser."

In harling, then, your first care is to the provision of a complete outfit of the finest and best. After that, and not a long way after, comes confidence. Never despair; be confident. Remember that your gillies see every expression on your face all the day through—and what analysts they are! Be you confident and they will be so, and this will bring from them the extra turn out here or there at likely spots that may make a successful day where a blank one would have been yours had the corners of your mouth once dropped.

In my time I have had gillies varying much in their ability, but nearly all are alike in their desire to "kill a fush" when their hopes are kept high. Think not either to get in your sigh by turning your back upon them, for they will tell by your very boots whether your heart is in the enterprise or not. Two of the cleverest, most persevering, respectful, and deserving of respect among these fine gillies are the men whose photos I give.

Their names are Malcolm and Donald, from Foyers Hotel, with whom it is ever a pleasure to fish, be the success what it may.

The fishing of Loch Ness calls for more judgment and calculation than does that in Loch Tay. I am speaking now of the fishing from Foyers. There are here two primary matters to be considered when making the morning start. "Where is the wind?" It is more than probably from either the south-west or north-east—that is, up or down the loch. Then, "What day of the week is it and how are the steamers to run?" For much advantage and comfort are to be derived from the fact that you can, after going with the wind twelve miles to the north-east, come back by the steamer, which, by the arrangement of our host, Mr. Tilston, will take you, your men and your boat home at quite a moderate charge. Or you may on certain two days of the week, while the wind is in the same quarter, go by early steamer to Fort Augustus and fish home some twelve miles with the wind. So you can almost always with good judgment ensure that your boatmen will be, without exhausting efforts, travelling at the right speed and in the direction most likely to allure the fish.

When the wind is in the east—a direction not disliked at Foyers—you should be up early and on board the steamer for the Inverness end of the loch, thence to start your twelve miles' fishing homewards.

Skill on the part of your gillies can add much to your comfort as well. You must remember that the loch is nearly twenty-four miles in length, and that waves soon gather force in such long water. There is no actual danger from them, as a rule, but they demand respect, as may be seen from a line or two that I have taken from a letter from a friend who has tasted the loch's waters: "While I consider it the grandest loch in Scotland for fishing, I know how quickly a sea gets up on it, and how suddenly my upset took place." On the occasion of which he writes our two boats had drifted to nearly the end of the loch, and, when quite at the end, should have crossed to the pier to take the steamer home. It was darkening fast, too fast; and Gaelic was passing between Donald and Malcolm, with looks to the weather quarter, which ended in their advising an immediate crossing. I beckoned to my friend to wind up at once and follow as closely as possible. He understood, and we were crossing together for some time, after which their boat started on a different course. This, had all gone well, would have brought them first to the pier. My men plied their oars with an evident determination to get well across with as little drift as possible towards the shallow jutting out centre of the end round which we must get before the shelter of the pier could be reached. Waves came down that needed the prompt turning of the stern of the boat to meet, and which, had

they caught her sideways, would have inevitably filled her. These having passed us, excepting the bucketful or two we shipped, her nose was again turned for straight across until the next series of dangers approached. Meanwhile, my friend was within a hundred yards of safety, with but the jutting point to round. I saw no danger for him, but my men muttered between their teeth each time they could steal a glance at the other boat. I was certainly wet through waist downwards, and was so far worse off than my friend. His boat had but a few yards to go. But they had to encounter the breaking water on the shallow point, and then we fairly held our breath as we saw the terrible waves that had just passed us with but a ducking, going straight at their broadside. They were engulfed, and for many seconds we could see nothing of them, and then only three heads were visible. Boat, everything, had gone, everything but that which was priceless. We had plenty of sea room, and had come safely round, and we were soon hastening to their assistance. Fortunately, the pier was close at hand and the pier-man—a strapping Lovat's scout, and just home with a kit that proved to contain all the warm under and top wear that could be desired under such circumstances. Not only were his clothes welcome, but his joking, laughing face as he tore off the wet things and rubbed my friend down front and back was the very medicine for a half-drowned man.

It should be remembered that the early part of that season gave almost continuous storms from the south-west, especially so on north-westerly coasts of these islands, and, as these winds affect Loch Ness more than any others, the storms there were of quite unusual violence. This notwithstanding, we got ten splendid fish between us in our seven days. Moreover, but for this one unfortunate miscalculation, we ran no real risks in this time.

To calm any fears that may have been raised by this reading of the upturned boat, I here give particulars of what was going on during, and previous to, the time of the accident at the Fort Augustus end. One of the tradesmen there, who is a very ardent angler, has had the misfortune to lose one of his hands; yet in spite of this drawback he was frequently to be seen fishing all unaided, and successfully too. On one occasion he landed three fish in one day. We, then, are assuredly quite safe with two good men who have given hostages by taking to themselves wives, and who have since, in all probability, multiplied good reasons for taking care of their precious lives.

PART III.

FISHING IN THE HOME COUNTIES.

FISHING IN THE HOME COUNTIES.

CHAPTER I.

MEMORIES OF HAPPY DAYS ON MANY RIVERS—QUEER INCIDENTS.

So small a percentage of the London Anglers, who have for so long a period done me the honour of electing me their president, are salmon anglers that it is to be expected that I should desire to give from my experience some account of the sport and pleasure I have derived from the pursuit of the fish sought after by the great majority of them.

It will be a very real pleasure for me to take from my well-stored memory of happy days, and instructive, incidents that have come to me while fishing the Thames.

The door of the store-house opens widely at the mere thought of doing this, and days, men and occurrences, crowd out in such profusion that care is needed to select such of my experiences as will most concisely convey to my readers where I have sought for and how I have caught my fish.

I have fished in most of our English rivers; the Taw, Torridge, Lynn and Exe have given

me creels full of their plucky diminutive trout, and the Test has added many a dozen of grayling to my long score of captures.

On the banks of the Trent I have tried my hand among the roach, chub and barbel; and in a flat-bottomed, equilateral triangle-shaped boat, locally called a raft, I have sat many a night out on the breamy Bedford Ouse, with a lantern fixed in each of the two angles facing the stream, the third angle, or point, being pushed into the sedges, which, fostered by the muddy banks and sluggish stream, grow to an extraordinary height.

On the Norfolk Broads I have spent a week or two vainly trying to secure one of the mighty pike or perch which we hear so much of and seldom see. Many health-giving days have I passed on the Lea, but I must confess that the canny fish of that river have suffered little diminution by my skill.

I am at home on the banks of the Colne, whether it be Hythe End, Wraysbury, Horton Mill, Poyle Mill, Longford or Harmondsworth (the two last places are not so famous for fish as for fish-poachers; here the latter are to be found as clever as generations of judicious marriages between the poaching inhabitants of the two villages, and constant exercise of their skill can make them; and their cleverness is likely to be maintained, as a certain amount of practice is assured to them by kingly charters)—at Hubert de

Photo by] [*W. K. Geer.*

WHERE THE WRAYSBURY COLNE ENTERS THE THAMES.

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Burgh's, Godfrey's, Iver, Uxbridge, Rickmansworth, or never-to-be-forgotten Mercer's Mill, at West Drayton, where, as a lad, my uncle, a clever angler, gave my cousin and me a lesson in angling.

At that time I was not so unmindful of hunger, while the fish bit, as now, and about twelve I persuaded my relatives that it was time to lunch. A veal and ham pie was produced and placed upon the low wall overlooking the mill tail; just then our tutor hooked a large chub, and, as I rushed to pick up the landing net, I quite forgot my hunger and the means of satisfying it; unfortunately, I touched that veal and ham pie with my elbow, and it toppled over into ten feet of water. I can see the swinging motions of that slowly sinking pie quite plainly yet.

Many years since the two miles of the river Colne immediately adjacent to Wraysbury station was the property of Mr. Laddell. He was as generous a man as any angler could wish to approach and I fear that I and four others must plead guilty to having trespassed far too freely on his kindness, which proved to be as unlimited as the sport in his river. We used to walk from the station to his house and ask for Mr. Laddell, and in a twinkling he was with us, bearing a smile, the owner of which could never say "nay," and his "yes" was invariably accompanied with a sort of half-wicked shake of the head which said, "You are a nice five, I can see."

I must not stop to tell of the takes of those days when twenty or thirty pound per rod was usual, or of the twelve to twenty jack per day which was frequently the result of friend A.'s clever spinning; neither must I stop to speak of pleasant outings, and sundry picnics, when female society gave a charm to the ruins of Hythe End Mill.

I will only tell of the funny incident which happened to one of the five, whose wife—let me tell you in passing—was a favourite at the Mill Cottage where our tea was made; indeed, a favourite with all who knew her, and the idol of her husband. If Mrs. B. had a fault—she has none now—it was an overwhelming love for flowers, and well I knew it, for go where we would, catch what we might, my friend had to take home some flowers, and many trains he lost while violet and primrose hunting.

In the tail of the mill (from which to the Thames, some quarter of a mile, there is no impediment to fish working up) may, at times, be found an almost incredible quantity of barbel. B. and I determined one day to give these fish a trial, while friends D. and E. were busy amongst the roach at the "Tree" and "Bridge" swims, and A., at his old game, spinning for jack.

It was about five when we struck our first fish, and in three hours, when it was time to leave off, twenty-eight were landed. Rods, tackle and fish were quickly packed and shouldered and we were

off to meet our friends at the station. In the excitement B. had quite forgotten the promised flowers; but as we paused to open the first gate, the thought of home, wife and flowers, came back to him, and down went his bag of fish, and he was gone with a shout of, "I'll catch you; I've forgotten something."

He could run then, and as I sauntered and rested I fully expected him to overtake me; but the station was reached, the train came in, and we four took our seats, and, as I held the door open, I looked up the platform and said, "B., as usual, has lost his train for his flowers."

"Right here," and the train was on the move. Just then in rushed an elderly gent, rod in hand, and naturally made straight for the open door, while his basket was seized, from a country lad, by the guard, just as the train left the platform. Bang went the door, and we were face to face with the most extraordinary fisherman that ever man set eyes on. Why, he was dressed in black, with a swallow-tail coat and high hat!

Could it be that he was a mute who had attended a funeral in the morning and gone a-fishing in the afternoon? At any rate, his dress favoured the supposition. How he blew and puffed! Speak he couldn't, as his wind was gone. I pitied that old party from the bottom of my heart. What a race he must have had! I offered him a nip of brandy, when, to my horror, he pointed to his

mouth and ear, intimating that he was deaf and dumb; but he gave a pull at the flask notwithstanding.

The conversation soon turned to the absent B., and many were the jokes and endless the laughter we enjoyed at his expense. Sometimes I thought that "dummy" was infected by our mirth; especially did I think so when I saw the bottom of his capacious black vest bubble up just as the suggestion was made that we should draw lots who should be messenger and consoler to the disappointed wife.

It soon became evident that D. was not only taking a peep at our strange fellow passenger, but that he was fast becoming alarmed, for he exclaimed, "For God's sake, give that afflicted and miserable-looking fellow another pull at the brandy; he's lapsing into fits." Not only lapsing, thought the rest of us, as we saw the old gent roll from side to side, and desperately clutch at the window; he's got them. Two of us seized him, and, as we did so, off rolled the high hat and disclosed the curly wool and well-known features of our lost companion.

Then we all had fits which lasted until we became aware how near we had been to losing him altogether.

B.'s explanation.—"As I left home this morning and gave my wife the usual kiss, I promised her some of the roses which she has so often admired

in the cottager's kitchen garden, on the little island above Hythe End Mill. I little thought that the fulfilment of that promise would so nearly have cost me my life.

"As you know, I am prepared to run a step or two, and to risk a train or so, to get my flowers, and when I ran back to-night it was with a light toe and a lighter heart, as we had had a good day's sport. I had pleasant friends to meet, a good home to go to, and an angel's smile to greet me.

"Few appeared the jumps and strides necessary to bring me to the cottage, and, within five minutes of my leaving you, I had obtained permission and gathered a score of roses, and was in the act of bounding back over the plank-wide hand bridge, when the old woman appeared, scissors in hand, at the other end. Jump over her I could not, as I was too close, and to stop myself I clutched the rail, which snapped, and I was precipitated head-first into the water. Unfortunately for me, the weeds had been cut above, and had gathered there in a thick decaying mass, which, while it permitted my head to force its way through, resolutely refused a passage to my heels, and I found myself in this awful predicament—that my heels remained in the air and the whole weight of my body was thrown on to my head, which was fast sinking into the thick black mud.

"How long this lasted I can only guess. I

know I fought hard for life, as I knew that if I could only get my head where my heels were I was saved.

"I must have been in the last throes of suffocation when the old lady's screams brought assistance, and, with the aid of a rope, I was dragged out, and gin—the only spirit at hand—was poured down my throat, which as nearly did for me as the mud.

"To the surprise of my rescuers I sat up almost immediately, and soon afterwards walked into the cottage and asked for the loan of some clothes. I was advised to go to bed, &c., &c.; but, as I was determined, they were lent me—Mr. Hancock's best, of course—and here I am in the Sunday-go-to-meeting suit.

"That I should have missed any but a South-Western train is certain, and I should have missed this but for the strong aid of the country lad who trotted with the basket, in which you will find a mud-stained bunch of roses."

Queer incidents often happen very near together both as regards time and place.

Who has not admired the easy, graceful, yet rapid, movements of our modern waiter? How quietly and dexterously he advances and retires. A look will bring him to your side, brimful of respectable attention for orders, which he has no sooner received than it's "Yes, sir," two steps backward, a slight bow, and he is gone. "Very

much gone, indeed!" will be echoed by those who care to read the following paragraph.

Mr. Edwards, at that time the genial host and treasurer of the Battersea Friendly Angling Society, having been fortunate enough to obtain an order to fish that splendid reach of the Colne known as Doctor Meadows' water, decided to invite a very old friend to participate in the day's sport. Happy is the man who has a trusty friend with whom to share such double-handed pleasures.

Great were the preparations that preceded the start—so great indeed, that no room was left for the necessary lunch. "Good idea!—my waiter shall bring it down to us by the mid-day train," said the host. And the waiter did, and nicely he laid it out on the snow-white cloth which was stretched on the river's bank. Nothing was wanting, every etcetera was in its place, and there sat the lucky two, with appetites as keen as December winds and fair sport could make them, doing the fullest justice to the waiter's spread, while he stood near with watchful eyes and ready hand for the signal to open that other bottle. The word was given, the cork flew out, glasses were filled, and then with two steps backward, and a bow the waiter's gone!—gone into the deep, well-baited hole from which the fish had come.

The sly, foxy, Mole bream have put me on my mettle. Once I determined to wait upon

them in a certain hole at Cobham until I did get them. Three long days I assiduously courted them, and never a bite rewarded my early, late and constant attentions. The fourth day was preceded by a severe thunderstorm, and on reaching the river and seeing it discoloured, I considered myself released from my rash determination.

Just to prove how useless it would be to fish, I put my tackle together for a swim. A couple of strong-smelling brandlings were soon upon the hook, and, as I lowered the rod into its rest, the float cocked, and, strange to say, it immediately came up upon its side, and then slid up-stream and down out of sight.

That was the commencement of the best day I ever had with the bream.

I have wandered by innumerable river banks and have frequently been fishless, but never once have I failed to see something to admire.

When I look back on all my wanderings it's the happy times I have spent punting or bank-fishing on the Thames that call the loudest.

For full forty years my home has been near its banks, and during all that time it has been as a close and faithful friend. In joyous times, with footsteps light, I have fished its pools and sung or, in some other way, given voice to the joys that filled me; while in my hours of sadness it has been a comforter, bringing, for a time, forgetfulness of toil and trouble, and making the burdens

seem, when next I had to meet them, much less grievous and not so hard to bear.

So it's of the dear old Thames that I will write; and tell you how and where I have caught its roach, chub, dace, barbel, perch, bream and pike, not forgetting the plucky, toothsome gudgeon; and, of course, a little about the trout.

CHAPTER II.

THE THAMES.

THE BARBEL AND HOW TO BAIT FOR HIM—THE BEST FRIEND THAMES FISH EVER HAD—THE BREAM—GUDGEON PARTIES.

SHALL I write of the upper reaches or the lower? Shall we go up from Old Windsor towards the river's rise or down from Egham Lock towards its fall, down past Staines, The Hook, Laleham, Chertsey Weir and bridge, past Dumsey Deeps?—Stay a moment here; it was Dumsey Deeps I baited for the best friend Thames fish ever had.

He was also the kindest possible patron to the professional fishermen yet not one amongst their number try how they would, and no doubt they tried their best, could ever show him sport.

BARBEL.

For some years I resided quite near this spot and I offered him a bed and a try with me. He accepted an invitation for that day week and, in the meantime, I baited three barbel swims; Dumsey

Photo by] LOOKING DOWN FROM BELL WEIR TOWARDS STAINES. [*W. K. Geen.*

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Deeps was one. I longed to give him sport and, to ensure success, I baited each swim night and morning with ever-increasing doses of well-scoured lobs.

Life comes to food in growing numbers; feed your sparrows for a week and see.

In a dark cool outhouse I kept four tubs—casks cut in halves—well supplied with moss. Little village folks brought tins jugs and utensils various filled with worms captured by candle-light the night before and these were stock for tub No. 1, to be promoted, when searched over, to No. 2 and so on until they reached No. 4, by which time they were red, tough and so inviting that sport would surely attend the using of them.

The little army of wormers soon grew numerous as, in addition to their pay of sixpence per quart, they often got pats and smiles and a lump of cake.

Barbel like to grub for food in deep holes that have rugged hard bottoms in, or near, the strongest and heaviest stream. If the stream is very strong I use clay so as to sink the worms quickly. It is at the very commencement of the hole you must draw your fish when ledger fishing, which is the method most likely to get the largest. I make the clay into dumplings, with worms inside them, and drop them so that they may sink to the spot where the baited hook will go.

I much prefer the ledger to a float as with the latter there is sure to come a desire to go the full

length of the hole and then give a swishing strike that is very like to spoil the chances.

When these fish are on the feed they come in turn to the clay balls, grub out a worm, put their side across the stream and are away to the rear of all the shoal, where they again wait their turn. Sometimes they come in double file, but always in drill-like order, and therefore care is needed not to be too quick in striking at them or you may prick a fish that will leave the hole and take all the others with him. The preliminary nibble means only "now look out," so wait for the drawing pull, and, when that comes, strike quickly and hold as firmly, just for a moment, as the fine tackle you should use for barbel justifies.

It was a useful nine foot rod that I lent my guest. It tapered so that the finest gut could bend it almost double, and yet it never wobbled, and the spring that was in the top helped the wielder of it to cast the smallest bullet. My finest dark-dyed, silk plaited line was used, and to it was joined a yard of stained gut, at the finer end of which was a No. 6 hook. A bullet just sufficient for its purpose was selected, and was kept from sliding towards the hook by a split shot, nipped on the gut thirty inches from it.

You can fancy how carefully I chose two maiden lobs and how particular I was to put them on the hook so that their heads and tails could wag enticingly.

My anxiety was great that morning and I would willingly have bartered a lengthened period of lucky fishing to ensure success that day.

Fortune favoured me; the flood that had been running cleared from day to day and, on the morning of our start, the water was just perfection, a little cloudy. The sky had ever-shifting driving clouds which hid the sun, and the up-stream wind gave a lovely ripple that aided the dark water to hide our movements in the punt. Through the full leaved branches of the withy boughs the breeze came with hiss and whisper to fan our cheeks and help to make us hopeful. Would the promise thus held out be fulfilled?

I asked to be allowed to make the first cast for him, and, as I handed back the rod, he looked at me, saw what was in my mind, and laughingly warned me that he was the most awful Jonah that ever held a rod.

For quite five minutes the punt seemed to me to be full, from head to tail, of breathing expectancy, and then followed fears of failure. I thought back to discover a mistake. Had I overbaited, or baited so late that the eels had got the worms? Should I up poles and on to the next swim? At last I thought of a plan it is always well to try. I scattered a little food. I threw in half a dozen broken worms well up stream so that they might sink towards the fish which might be merely hanging back waiting the feeding-time they had

grown to expect. It answered. At last I saw the top jig, jig, and then the whole rod bend as the fish attempted his journey to the rear.

For full two hours the fish kept the fisher and his assistant busy, and, when the lull came (it only lasted a few minutes) I availed myself of it to give them more dumplings with just a broken worm or two at which they could come and nozzle but not fill themselves.

By lunch-time the fish were packed in the bottom of the well as sheep are in a pen so, to make room for others, I, in obedience to the orders of my guest, put all the fish, excepting only two, back into the river. It need scarcely be said I took them far enough down stream to ensure they would tell no tales to those we still desired to catch.

The afternoon's fishing was without a break in its success. The luncheon hour's rest and the provoking clay balls had evidently made the fish hungrily anxious for the luscious worms that had accompanied the clay on previous days. No sooner had the baited hook found its resting-place than it was seized and the rod was bent with the efforts of a fish to go rearwards.

It was a wonderful day and a wondrous take of barbel for one man to get.

So the promise of the morning was gloriously fulfilled. I have a rod to commemorate that day, much too grand for use, which has inscribed upon its butt " From Thomas Spreckley to Philip Geen."

Yes, my guest was the late Thomas Spreckley, so long the president of the T. A. P. S.

I am pleased to write these few words, in my poor book, of his work for anglers. I am thinking, and it's so, no doubt, that the good he did by his deeds of charity to needy folk is written of elsewhere.

In continuing our journey down we shall pass Shepperton, Halliford, and Walton. At each of these places trees, bushes, gates and other landmarks, have been requisitioned to aid me in fixing my poles in the exact spot necessary for the successful fishing of each pitch. Let it be a shallow, a deep, a straight run, or an eddy, its depth and the nature of its undercrust are as well known to me as the particular fish which they are most likely to produce. Yes! no doubt, down stream would be easy and pleasant for me to write about, but, before I decide to go down, let me just think a moment or two of the many profitable days that I have spent between the beautiful banks of the up-stream reaches.

In the meantime let us return to Walton that I may tell you of the Deeps and the famous bream that have their home there.

BREAM.

Bream must be sought for in still, quiet eddies or in slowly flowing deeps, as they are armed with

fins to suit only sedate movements in almost still water.

Thames bream are more sportive than those in any other river; their flesh is firmer and they are far less slimy.

They are to be found so far up the river as Datchet, where they are sometimes caught of quite large size, but not in such numbers as lower down.

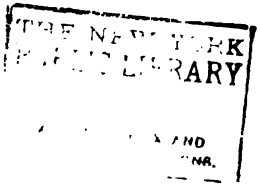
Walton Deeps holds the palm for great successes with this fish. When fishing there the punt should be held by a ripeck fixed in the centre of the river while the tail is turned a little slanting against the stream by ripeck number two.

Clay, grains and brandlings, well mixed and made into balls, is by far the best ground-bait, and red worms or brandlings the most successful bait.

The water is deep, but flows so easily that a float is often used with much success, but I prefer the ledger, and I use the same tackle as that described for barbel, excepting only that I have a smaller hook.

When float-fishing the shots should be fifteen inches above the hook, and the float should be held back a little so as to let the baited hook be well forward and slightly off the bottom, as bream have to almost stand upon their heads to take their food from off the ground.

Now let us go up through Datchet, noted for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"THERE WERE NO ROWDIES THEN."

many things in general but particularly for a many-sided professional fisherman, Lumsden, who knows where and how to seek for sport, and who will say "I say, I say"—well, more times a day than I would care to count. The last time I saw him he said "It's useless to try to-day, I say, Mr. Geen, I say. I tried this morning the same spot that I got my thirteen pound carp, I say, and all I took was a gudgeon with a lob worm, I say."

GUDGEON.

In my earliest memories of the Thames the gudgeon is associated with fishing parties, love-making, and a dinner, at the local hotel, in which this dainty fish was, as the whitebait is at Greenwich, the most talked of dish. The first week in September was the favourite time for gudgeon contests, punt against punt, in each of which were fisherman, lady angler and gentleman ditto. The winners laughed and joked and, in some instances, boasted a little; the losers paid the bill.

Try to realise a day on the Thames—there were no rowdies or hooligans then—with her whose company you would most desire on such an occasion, while other punt or punts are similarly manned and on a like quest. All have started with smiling faces, the ladies a little flushed with the excitement of the coming contest.

How the fishermen would rake and rake and

how quickly bait the lady's hook; and rake again, until the fish had gathered from so far as the cloudy water had travelled to tell them that there was a disturbance above that must mean food!

No sport is so sure, no fish a bolder biter; the little cork float, weighted almost to vanishing point, will disappear, time after time, until it may be you have many dozens from your first pitch.

At times a shoal of perch, attracted by the movement of gudgeon and minnows, will head up, and then you will be pleased with the delight of your lady should she be the first to get one. While the perch are there slyly keep your hook unbaited, it won't be for long, and watch her face for your reward.

A landing for lunch and another for tea are almost begrudged and, last of all, comes a comparison of catches; no, not last, for there is the dinner yet to eat with three of its items unvarying, Gudgeon, Partridge and Champagne.

How the old-fashioned puntsmen enjoyed those times may be gathered from their regrets that such parties are now very rare and that the gudgeon is passing through a long period of neglect.

Not long since four of us decided on another friendly match of this sort to see if the sport was really what our memories painted it.

It was a real old type of professional I patronised; one who, I knew, would be pleased to talk

of gudgeon and of old times to me. Indeed, I remembered his tongue, once started, used to be very hard to stop so I thought it best to warn my companion of this failing that she might use her woman's wit to stop him if need arose. He and I had fished much together, braved bad weather and numerous failures. So I was pleased to see him again and glad, of course, to hear him say:

"Why, bless me! sir, you look younger than ever." The telling of this fib, at which I was silly enough to look pleased, started him:—

"Good morning, ma'am, allow me. Handing the ladies in and out is one of our old customs and privileges for which I am a stickler. I am not so slippery shod or fingered as your London gents."

"Do you think the gudgeon are likely to bite to-day?" was the answer to his opening, a kindly-meant effort, no doubt, to stem or, at any rate, to steer the old man's tongue.

"You may not know it, ma'am, but so long as you do me the honour to come in my punt, I am the responsible party." Then turning to me, "Your chief duty, sir, will be to see you do not miss a bite; I'll look after the lady. Why, only the other day I had a young married couple out with me jack fishing; the husband got a run, hooked a fish and before I could get the net out, lifted a four-pounder bang in betwixt and between the lady's legs. The lady——"

"Oh, what bird is that over there?"

"A moorhen, ma'am."

"Let's go quietly and see how close we can get to it." Our man was not easy to stop, but he was well-bitted that day; indeed, he did little talking, for him, and he worked the rake so well that our rivals had to pay the bill, which, of course, included the usual dinner.

CHAPTER III.

EGHAM TO OLD WINDSOR LOCK.

PERCH FISHING—THE ROACH—BEATEN BY A MILLER'S BOY—THE LEA ROACH FISHER.

Now we will on through Windsor with its unrivalled walks and scenery, its first-class barbel, jack, and chub fishing, and its numerous bank swims; through Maidenhead, Cookham and Marlow, the much-frequented haunts of oarsmen, artists, tourists and pleasure-seekers of all sorts and conditions, from the boisterous beanfeasters to the loving couples discovered here and there, hidden away amongst the osiers and bulrushes. On to Henley for its monster chub, Sonning for its barbel, Pangbourne for its roach, Goring for its perch, Moulsford and Wallingford for its jack and Shillingford for another grand day amongst the barbel, which are veritable innocents compared with those down Chertsey way.

At Clieveden we must have a few hours amongst the shoals of big perch; but we will quickly pass the much-poached waters of Abingdon. A day we will spend—if it please you—at Oxford,

and then on to the strictly preserved waters of Eynsham; a day or two here, if you can spare them, and, if possible, let's on to Lechlade. Then right-about-face homewards, fishing each and every good swim discovered during our up-stream travels.

Space forbids my writing of the Thames from Cricklade down, so I will choose a portion that holds every kind of fish and tell you where and how I tried for each. For this purpose we will go from Egham Lock to old Windsor Weir; and we will start from Egham quite early, say six A.M.

It was just about that hour some years ago that a friend and I approached this lock in a punt. It was a winter's morning and we quite suddenly determined to shoot the weir instead of waking the lock-keeper.

The weir was being repaired; it always was, and is still. Huge piles had been driven in the river's bed, against one of which, in the semi-darkness, the tail of our punt was driven, and, in response to this blow, her head swung round and toppled the punter into the very edge of the tumbling water, over which he disappeared. Fortunately, in my truant days I learnt to swim. It was Tommy Hoole, whom you should remember, for he worked hard and long for London anglers, who got the fright; he was left in the punt, which was stuck between the piles, to wonder, so he said, if he should ever again see me alive, and to rebel at his utter helplessness.

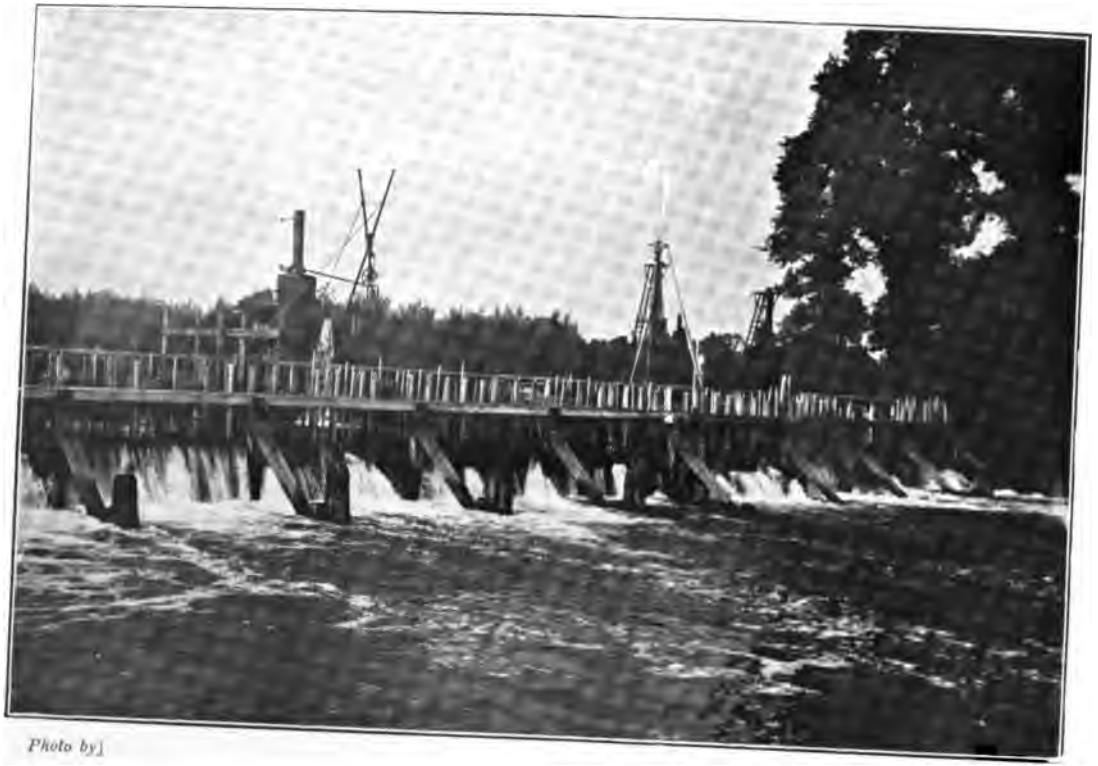
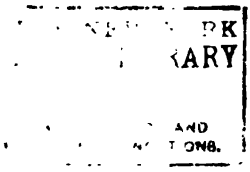


Photo by] EGHAM WEIR. *[W. K. Geen.*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The water was cold but very kind; it hustled me down the straight run without giving the eddies a chance, and I was touching ground before I had given a thought to the long boots I had on.

As we leave the lock notice how quietly the water flows as compared with the rapid stream below. Now, ye roach fishers, if you should ever be in quest of a pitch or two which will afford a good day's winter fishing, you may choose them here from amongst a score, which can readily be discovered near the boughs that cover the opposite bank for a full mile up stream. The boughs hang well out over some easily baited and fished eddies, varying in depth from six to ten feet, and every now and then there is a break in these woody harbours which is just sufficient to give the bank angler space to wield his long rod. A few years since you might have taken many dozen perch in a day's fishing from these swims. In the spring I have seen the boughs covered with perch spawn; but, I am sorry to say, the mania for steam launches, driven at a furious rate, sprang up, and their chopping waves have year by year forced the ribbons of spawn from their anchorage to be lost in the depths of the weir below, where the necessary sun can never reach them.

Don't forget to try a small, well-scoured lob once or twice in each swim, for if you fail to catch the last of the perch you may lay hold of some of the monster tench for which they are noted.

Next, we sniff the tar factory, and, if you can stand the smell here, you may fish one of the best barbel swims in this long reach. It can be, and frequently is, fished from the tow-path; and a bootmaker of Egham has taken some extraordinary fish by throwing out his ledger, laying his rod upon the path, and standing well back.

On we go, and, as we travel, the stream changes sides—instead of flowing gently against the tow-path it rushes with considerable force under the trees, bushes and boughs, which clothe the high and crumbling bank opposite. Skilled chub fishers should go and try their skill; the chub are there and have been these many long years. Now and then I have coached a friend who could work this tit-bit; but, unless you have served your apprenticeship, it will be better for you to keep your tackle for the next mile, where we shall find the stream flowing more quietly under the high banks of Ankerwycke.

We must not forget the second good barbel swim as we pass the sharp turn in the river where at flood time it rushes against and over the road from Staines to Old Windsor. Should you decide to bait this swim with worms, be very liberal, as this hole is the home of innumerable eels as well as of barbel and chub, and I may add that it used never to fail me when I wanted a few good perch.

Should bank anglers be here when the waters are out and coloured let them try just above this

deep hole; they will then find a nice, large eddy, with a depth of five feet; and, if it be a mild day, it's ten to one in their favour that they hook some ancients from the hole below.

Next, we reach the Mead, and opposite is Magna Charta Island.

Before we leave the Mead, you must please allow me to say a few words about the large bed of rushes at the tail end of the island; this, at one time, was the haunt of large numbers of perch and jack.

Perch.

It is said that every Englishman will claim to be a judge of horses until he has purchased a trouble on four legs; be that as it may I never yet had a companion in my punt who did not know how to paternoster for perch.

Quietly drop your fine gut paternoster, that has a small lead at the end and a minnow on each of the two hooks, or may be a gudgeon on one of them, with as little disturbance as you can just beyond the nearest weed. Let the lead rest on the bottom a moment, then lift and move it to the right or left; if there's no success do the same by the next nearest shelter, and so on until each likely spot has been tried; then on to the next pool to repeat your efforts.

Perch are the boldest and most fearless of feeders; they will often follow the bait until so

close to the fisher that he can see them, with spines erect, perfect in shape, markings and colouring, veritable warriors ready for the fray.

During the summer months they are in weirs and at the edges of swift streams where minnows and other small fish congregate to sport, scour and enjoy themselves, but, with the first flood of Autumn, they fall back to quiet eddies, deep pools and under boughs, where they move in and out, up and down, with wide-open, staring eyes, as if, with these alone, they would fascinate to helplessness the dainty little fish they are seeking for.

Perch will at times take almost any bait, but there are really only two used, worms and minnows.

It is difficult to demonstrate, even to yourself, that you may often catch every member of a shoal; yet their mid-water swimming aids you to do so occasionally. I will give an instance when this undoubtedly occurred.

In a hole in the river Evenlode, just at the point where Blenheim Lake flows out, I threw in some half dozen brandlings, and, as I stood hidden behind the accommodating bush that overhangs the pool, I saw a shoal come at the sinking worms. The nearest fish came quite near me, and others in his wake were plainly visible, while in the farther distance I could see shadowy forms. I was soon at my well-stocked bag to give them another taste or two before I stealthily prepared the exact tackle to have my will with them. This

consisted of a thirteen foot, light, bamboo rod, a Nottingham reel, and light line, six feet of fine round gut, to which had been fastened a fair-sized Crystal hook, (Crystal hooks have handy, long shanks for worms), and a small float that needed but three shots on the line. On the hook I put two brandlings that had such freedom as made them look like those I had already given.

The host of "The Swan" at Eynsham was my pilot to this spot and he stood ready with the net.

The hole was at least 10 feet deep; but I trimmed my float for only five, which proved more than sufficient, for the float was carried away before it had time to cock. With the greatest care to keep hidden I brought the fish close to my feet, where it was netted without disturbance to the swimming shoal beyond the bough.

There was no break in our success; fish after fish greedily took the lure, sometimes almost from the surface, and at such times I could count the number remaining. This became easy when there were but five left to count. When the last was out there were thirty-three upon the bank. Six of them I have in a case, their weights varying from 2 lbs. 2 oz. to 3 lbs. 15 oz.

As we leave the Mead and take the road that skirts the river to the "Bells of Ouseley" we shall pass another famous barbel swim, possibly the best of the three if baited well and carefully. No mere throwing in any quantity of worms will

answer; you must have plenty of clay that you may ensure the swirling eddies and undercurrents do not carry the bait to a spot in this long, broad, deep and uneven-bottomed swim, where the ledger cannot be used. Should you be successful you will get hold of fish that will try your tackle, and you will be skilful if you can persuade all you hook to orego a rush which will regain for them their rocky home.

Opposite "The Bells" and for some distance down the stream there are overhanging boughs that give splendid shelter in flood time.

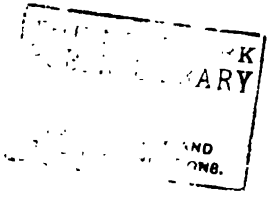
If any one desires a day in a punt without a fisherman he may always rely on getting one from Mr. Haynes, whose boat-house is close by.

Let the reader imagine he is with me for a day here in a punt, and the time October, or any later month. I shall have a zinc pail filled with clay, soaked bread and bran; also a bag of worms and, for your use, a light eleven feet cane rod, finest roach twist, drawn gut line, small cork float, not too fully shotted, and a number eight Crystal hook. Upon the hook we will place two of the smallest and brightest lobs in such a manner as to make them irresistible.

Quietly the lure travels to the first bough; it rests against a little twig; surely it will not stop there a second. What's that? A slight shake. Is it the preliminary which invariably precedes the taking away of a chub, or only a small fish trying

Photo by] *[W. K. Geen.*

NEAR THE BELLS OF OUSELEY "SHELTERING BOUGHS."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to do the impossible? Away it goes, and "swish" says the rod, with the true off-side chub strike. No need to give advice here; the point of the rod is well down and out as far as the arm can reach; the fish makes a desperate fight for his home under that bough; but he has met his master at last, and all he can do is to die gallantly. Quietly—we want his mate—the net is put under him, and a five-pound chub is in the well.

Two clean lobs are cut into halves and thrown into the water so that the stream will carry them to the spot where our hopes of the next fish are centred. The hook is carefully baited, the float is cast well out into the stream, and, as it travels down, it is quietly drawn under the bough. Almost before it settles into its former position you may have seen the same slight nervous shake of the float as if it knew full well the rush and fight that were coming; away it goes some 12 to 18 inches under water, and then the same perfect chub-strike which so few can imitate; a strike that seems to come from the fish with a thud all up the line and down the rod; like a flash of electricity it travels; and it does not end with the rod, or its wielder, but goes right through the nervous system of your companion.

Roach.

Now we are coming to boughs that overhang a steady eddy into which shoals of roach have

come for rest and food; the crumbling bank gives them a chance of a slug or worm. We must change our line for a finer one and put on a smaller hook. I will tie the head of the punt in among the bushes so that her tail hangs out, that you may have complete command of the fishy eddy that is just below. Here I will drop a ball of ground-bait, with heads and tails of worms invitingly sticking out, so that it will not open until it reaches the ground just between the stream and eddy. No! we will not plumb the depth; it's about 8 feet; but to make sure you reach the bottom, suppose it to be a trifle over. Cast out into the stream as you did for chub and bring it in as it is flowing down so that the worm upon the hook is near the ground-bait. Not long to wait and, probably, not long before we shall have taken the best of the roach from this swim.

Sit tight and we will on to the next quiet eddying hole, and, while doing so, notice that we are travelling round a sharp bend, or elbow, of the river, while, opposite, it circles round a very long distance. Imagine it in flood time and you will understand that if only half the fish from the great space of rushing water opposite have gathered here they must be thick indeed.

However should we fail to find sufficient sport here to occupy our day we will go a little farther up, round the next bend, to Hayne's Boughs. There we are sure to find fish after the first

Autumn flood. Many scores of times I have had success there that has astonished those who have only tried these boughs in summer-time or when the river was low.

The Bucks withy-clad bank from Old Windsor lock to below "The Bells" is the best mile of free winter roach fishing that I know of.

The Lea fisher may not approve this method of hanging on for catching roach. He prefers to sit behind a bush or the rushes that fringe the pool where his hopes are centred. Sparingly he uses the ground-bait and carefully casts it to just within the reach of his long rod. Have you seen him watch the cocking of his float until the merest tip is visible? Battles may be won or lost, governments may come or go, but he can only think of the little black speck that is gliding on its way, hoping that it will go under before it reaches the end of its allotted course.

Roach at times swim quite a distance from the bottom, and then the ground-bait and the paste, or gentles, are, of course unnoticed. Try a plan I have often known succeed.

Chew and throw in some bread, and fish mid-water with a pinch of dry soft bread pressed upon the hook with the forefinger and thumb of each hand. Immediately this bait settles in its place, by the aid of two small shot and the smallest float, the rough edges spring out from their compressed positions and there is quite a lively stir of bread

atoms, which frequently brings the largest fish to take the core that is still upon the hook.

I learnt this method from a miller's lad who took roach, during his dinner hour, in a swim I had baited but failed to get a fish from.

Watch a hook so baited while suspended in a glass of water and notice what a lively bait it is compared with paste.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OLD RIVER OR FLEET—HOW TO FISH THE WEIR—THAMES TROUTING—THE CHUB—COLNBROOK CHURCHYARD.

OLD Windsor lock is now in sight, and on its right is the end of the mile and a half of the Thames known as The Old River, or The Fleet, which cannot, I know, compare for beautiful landscapes or stirring historical associations with many other reaches, but yet may fairly boast of being an angler's paradise. Unfortunately, it is difficult to get at, except for the bank angler, who, travelling to Wraysbury, has only to follow his train for about a mile and he will find himself on the bank, where he may roam up or down in search of a swim, without fear of molestation, his only difficulty being the making of a choice among so many good ones.

We, who are in a punt, just below Old Windsor lock, have to make up our minds as to how to proceed. As we wish to fish down the whole of this shut-off portion of the Thames we must decide whether we will punt up the 1½ miles or take the quicker route; that is go through the lock and through the cut—it is only a quarter of a mile—and so to the head of the weir.

We will choose the latter route; we shall have no trouble in getting over. There is always a sluice-gate open through which I drop my punt with every care; professional fishermen so easily manage the task as to take away all thoughts of danger.

Now we are ready to fish this peaceful by-way into which the two great enemies to anglers—boats and launches—seldom enter and which, from its inaccessibility, is comparatively little fished.

We will first moor our boat close up to the weir sluice so that we can fish where the stream and eddy meet. We will try for one of the proud old trout for which the weir and the scours immediately below it are said to be noted.

Thames Trout.

Of late years so many varieties of trout have been placed in the Thames that there is a possibility of getting one now and then with a fly, but if you desire to catch a Thames trout proper you must use one of two methods; either spin a bait, artificial or natural, or pay down to them a live-bait.

The latter style is the one more in vogue although in no way so fascinating as the older method of spinning. Unfortunately, the number of those who spin has grown less and less until they are so few that it is quite rare to find, even

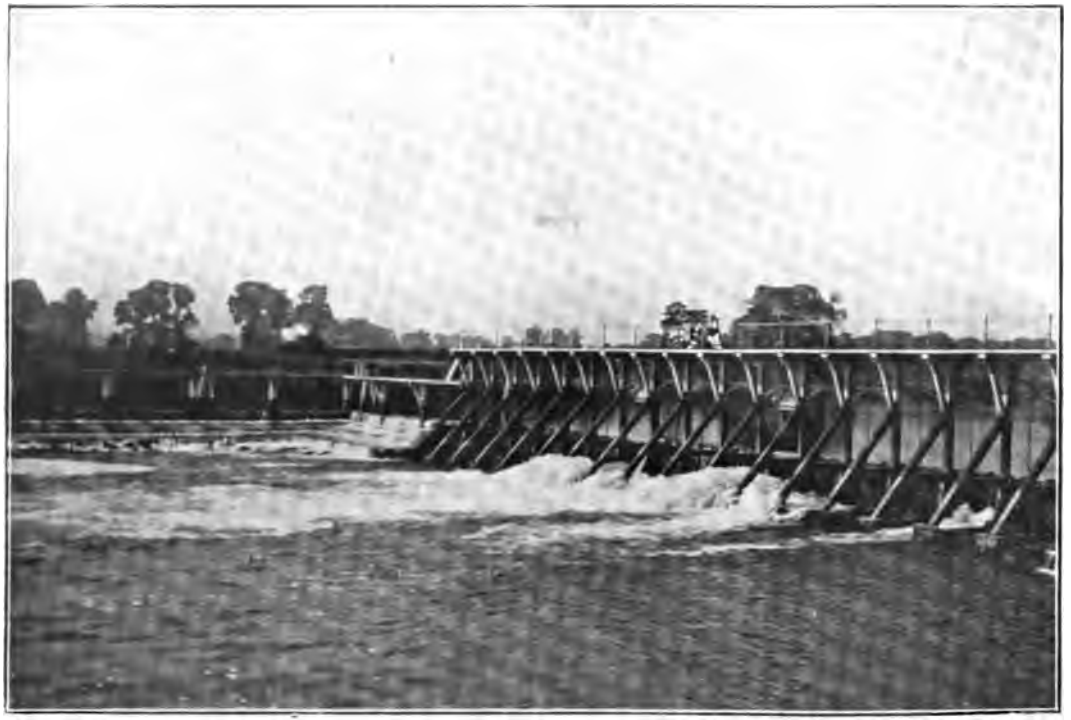
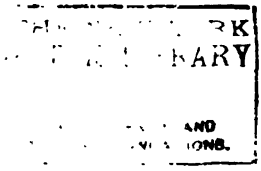


Photo by] OLD WINDSOR WEIR. [*W. K. Geen.*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among professionals, a fisher who can put a bleak upon a flight of hooks so that it will spin truly, as it must do if there is to be success.

It should commence to spin, not wobble, at the very beginning of the draw. You can see how necessary this must be particularly when you are fishing in the weirs, amongst the piles, under the foam of falling waters, or in a twirling eddy, where the cast and draw is but a few yards. In such places the fish are sure to see the bait the instant it touches water, and if the hooks be seen your labour is lost.

The custom now is to mark the place and time of a good fish's feeding and to moor your punt above it so that, at the appointed time, you may pay down to it a lively bleak or gudgeon. You will need much patience and a cushion, for it generally happens that you pay your visit on a fast day or when he has his eye on other fish that fly in all directions as he strikes at them. Alas! his movements are not near the fish upon your hook. He has chosen to feed in quite an unusual part of the hole that day.

Should you be fortunate and get him on I admit the skill that captures him, since the tackle must be of the finest, and the fisher well deserves his fish, even if he get more than one a month.

Trout like the shelter of foam-covered weir eddies. It was in one of those I hooked my biggest trout, so long waited for, a fourteen

pounder. It was not weighed. I brought it near the bank and, as it lay upon its side, the Eynsham lock-keeper dropped the landing-net fair upon its nose, fouled the hooks and freed the fish.

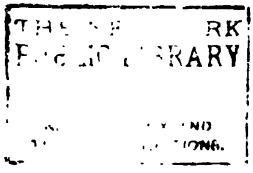
Thirty years had I sought and tried each likely place from Teddington to Lechlade for him or his equal, and my chance had come and gone. Such a chance comes twice to no man.

For spinning I use a 11 ft. 6 in. Grant Vibration Rod as seen in Lumsden's hands, a No. E Olena line, a small Geen's lead, and then 4 feet of wire, to which is attached my hook tackle, which consists of a thin piece of lead that may be pushed down the gullet of the bleak until it reaches to near the tail, when the mouth is closed on it, leaving only the swivel that is attached thereto shewing. I whip a length of fine white silk round the gills and bend the fish to the proper form. I then fix the two small triangle hooks, that are hanging to the swivel, in such a way as to assist the lead in keeping the bait the correct shape.

It is accepted as a fact by many, myself among them, that Thames trout will live to a great age and their jaws become so separated by the upturning of their lengthy snout that they die of starvation. For these old gentlemen a half-pound roach, so weighted that its movements are much hampered, is the only chance; but they are so few and far between that you might in the time

Photo by] [*W. K. Geen.*

LUMSDEN HAS BEEN TRYING MY ROD.
"I like this rod, I say, Mr. Geen—I say."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demanded catch many pike and grow to age yourself before you even learnt one's whereabouts.

We will not then waste the day here after a trout but will make for the eddy on our right. Here I have had many good takes of barbel, so we must not leave it unnoticed. They may be on and detain us for hours. I should like you, too, before leaving, to try with a paternoster all round its sides for the perch which head up here for minnows in the early season.

You may with profit spend a day in this snug corner, with your eyes now and then diverted from your rod to the pictures around you. Nature has not done all that she is capable of but it is a pretty scene and you will not gaze upon it for long without a feeling stealing over you of "it's all my own." The busy world comes not here, though close at hand; you have only to raise your eyes some six feet above the level of your head to see boat after boat, with their gaily-dressed occupants, pass noiselessly by—the falling waters drown every sound—and, as they enter or emerge from the cut, they have more the appearance of puppets in some grand show than that which we know them to be.

We will also try the boughs on the left about twenty yards below.

Cast out a ledger with a small round bullet and let it roll under the first bough; then throw in a small ball of clay with a few worms cut in halves.

I have done this scores of times and I don't think it ever failed to bring a fish. I remember that once, instead of the expected knock, knock, of a perch, the rod was almost tugged from the hand as the fish rushed out and up to the weir.

"At last I have a good Thames trout" was the expressed hope of my friend. I looked for the somersault in the air which a big trout will always turn but, instead, he fought stubbornly for the granite blocks that lay underneath the furious rush of the sluice. The only plan was, at all hazards, to lift his nose just a trifle, so that the weight of water might force him back from this dangerous spot; up he came, and we saw, amongst the piles, a monster barbel. For full ten minutes more he tried his hardest to regain his haunt; but it was not to be. He was safely netted and afterwards perpetuated.

The next half-mile on this side is jack water; especially is it so in spring and summer, and, in fact, until the first heavy flood in Autumn, by which they will be driven lower down to slacker water.

On our right, extending from within a hundred yards of the weir, is a long row of withies growing out from the undermined and wasting bank. Had we time we would land above, crawl to the edge, take a peep and see how fully the chub appreciate the home which the rush in flood-time has made for them. Here the fat and lazy, and the small and active, swim in and out amid the labyrinth of roots.

Chub.

There are two primary methods of getting rare sport with this bold feeder.

At the opening of the season, and on until November, you should catch them with the fly. For the first two months of this period they are on the scours or at the shallowing ends of pools where there is an increase in the pace of the river's flow. Almost any fly of grilse size (particularly those that have some dash of white) is likely to fetch them. I have been most successful with a Silver Doctor; but you can make nearly any fly attractive to the chub by giving it a tail of white kid or chamois leather.

Remember always that chub are very shy of the human face; therefore, cast as long a line as convenient.

In the summer time the fish are near the banks; so, throw your fly towards the boughs or high hollowed banks where there is a good depth of water.

As a guide to choice of what to try with, bear in mind that the chub are expecting all sorts of insects to fall from the trees or the long grasses that fringe high banks; now and then a frog comes and is quickly seized. So you may use almost anything that resembles life so long as you make natural its splash into the water without being seen yourself.

If you are on the bank you may indulge in dapping under any boughs that overhang a deep, slowly-flowing hiding place. Use every possible piece of cover for your movements and drop, or dap, your caterpillar, frog, or bee, into every likely place where your rod-point can find a way; leave the consideration of means of getting the fish out till the quickly-fought battle is over. You must have your stiffest rod and strongest tackle for dapping.

From November onwards, the later in the year the better, the most deadly bait that can be offered is pith and brains. Ask your butcher for two sets of bullock's brains, or half a dozen sets from sheep, which wash, cleanse and peel. On your fishing morning put them, chopped quite small, into a bait-can with some water, and take with you a cup, or, preferably, a cup-like vessel with a long enough handle to allow you to keep your hands dry when you come to throwing in spoonfuls from your can.

This baiting needs much care; you must manage so that the stream may take the attractive, slowly-sinking, glittering morsels to the eddying hole where the fish are lying. The water in the bait-can helps you by its weight in the throwing of the brains as near as possible to the spot you have decided on.

Have from your butcher also a length of pith from a bullock's spine from which cut an inch or more as may best cover your triangle hook. Pay

this down in the wake of the smaller tasty morsels which, no doubt, have opened the eyes and mouths of the winter-hungry fish.

Always remember that it is best to be fishing one or two feet from the bottom and, that the baited hook may be in advance, keep a slight check on the float's run.

So uniform has been my success with this bait that a total failure with it stands out, as exceptions to rules are apt to do.

Here is a memory of one such failure:—Seven hours on one of the best chub rivers in England, and in a portion most strictly preserved, patiently fishing with the most deadly—if properly manipulated—bait that can be offered, and not a fish.

Eddies gentle and rapid, deep and shallow, and not a fish. Six foot, steadily-flowing, straight runs, under high banks and overhanging willows, and still not a fish.

Yet this day will stand out in bold and pleasing relief when days of genial weather and great successes shall have been forgotten.

The wind blew, the blinding snow fell, the line froze and the fish refused to bite, but my friend's pluck and kind attention never failed; move where I would, be quick or slow, he was ever at my heels with the bait-can of chopped brains and a piece of ready-skinned pith; yet not a fish.

The next day there was a softer wind with an occasional burst of sunshine. I was gillie then and

my friend the fisher, and the large rush basket would not have held one half of the fish he caught had we retained them all.

When the first hard frost comes have a try with this latter method for some of those chub under the withies in the Old River which I pointed out to you as good chub-ground as we passed them.

Next we reach some broader, quieter eddies. Notice how easily they may be fished from the bank.

A short time since I was passing this spot while a bank angler was in the act of carefully lifting out a good roach; as the punt went slowly past I saw a little bit of paste put on the hook and, immediately above it, a very small ball of ground-bait. It was very gingerly lowered and, almost as soon as it could have reached the bottom, there was a strike, and, to judge by the top of the rod, another good roach would soon be upon the grass.

The broad, shallow, sandy slack, fringed with short rushes, before us on our left, is one of the spawning beds for roach; and about the third week in May it presents a curious spectacle. The mass of roach collected here causes the water to assume a dark slate tint, a shade of colour well known to the poacher, who has no need to approach too closely to see what is there; his net is drawn carefully round it, and the river is so much the poorer.

Alongside is the splendid trout-shallow known to all Thames fishermen. One day I saw three good fish feeding here at one and the same time and, for a moment, we hoped that our bait would have been seized. Several times they fed but each time it travelled over them, with the usual result.

Up with the weight, let the punt drift with the rapid stream, and, as she goes, we may feel thankful that our evening's meal does not depend on a trout, to catch which may take you longer than it shall to get seven years older.

As we round the bend there are some excellent swims where the bank angler may come. I should bring an extra rod and use it with a ledger. Let it be a two ounce flat lead that it may have a chance of remaining where you throw it, but there should be at least one yard of gut between this formidable piece of metal and the worm.

Try between the withy trees, slyly if the water is low and clear, but, should you be fortunate enough to find it high and a little coloured, you may stand boldly forward. Your take will only be limited by the time and skill devoted to its capture; to the bank the fish must come for rest and food while such a water is running.

The last tree hangs more out over the river than the rest, and under it is the noted barbel swim, to fish which I have pushed my punt oftener than I can ever hope to do again.

Locally this hole is known and spoken of as Colnbrook Churchyard. During the time I resided at Wraysbury I made several attempts to discover why it had been so named, but I could never get beyond the general belief that the Hounslow Heath highwaymen, who frequently made Colnbrook their head-quarters, used to sink their victims in this deep hole.

The last time I came here I was early, yet too late. As we rounded the corner we saw that it was already occupied by a punt, in which there was a gentleman, a lady, and a boy, and as we were deciding what we were to do, I saw the gentleman strike a fish, and then ensued one of the grandest struggles I had seen for many a long day.

Everything favoured the fish—a heavy stream was running, and if, with the aid of this he could only get fifteen short yards down stream, he would have no difficulty in regaining his liberty. There, in the deep hole, lies a tree, branches and all, as washed from a spot 500 yards up stream, where it toppled into the river. Many a good fish that could, and ought to, have been prevented, has done this little rush clean off the reel, much to the astonishment of sundry fishers who were not too clever by half at barbel fishing.

To-day the battle is pretty equal. A score of times, at least, the fish came within a yard or two of home, to be got back to the punt bit by bit, and, when he could no longer keep the bottom,

Photo by] COLNBROOK CHURCHYARD. [*W. K. Green.*

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he rolled over and over on the surface in such a manner as would have broken any tackle had not line been given. Back it was coaxed again, and, had I been in the punt, it would have been near enough to have reached it with the net. The lady made an attempt, but it was too far off.

The next time it came back she made another try, and failed. The gentleman said something which I fancied caused her to lose confidence, and, instead of keeping her net a little under water for the fish to come into it, she was holding it ready to drop when told. The gentleman gave the word; but, instead of putting it under, she, with exhausted nerve, dropped it on the fish, and so ended the struggle between Mr., Mrs. and Master Phillips and a twelve pound barbel.

CHAPTER V.

POACHING—A MEETING WITH A POACHER—JACK FISHING—OLD MORTIMER—DACE FISHING.

IMMEDIATELY after leaving what I have always since called Mr., Mrs. and Master Phillips' barbel swim, we shall reach the high perpendicular bank which has withstood, as best it could, the headlong rush of the angry floods for longer than my memory serves.

The winter's frosts, following fast upon the autumn rains, have materially assisted the determined and almost successful efforts of the river to get at the railway. A few more years and the small portion of meadow still intervening will have disappeared from Bucks and will have been carried over to the Berks side, there to aid in the formation of an island, which already rears its head sufficiently to act as a breakwater, much to the satisfaction of a number of jack and perch which make the tail and inner side their home.

No doubt this filching habit of Father Thames is not quite so satisfactory to the loser of the land as to the shoals of fish which are thereby fed and

provided with new haunts. The increasing twirling and twisting, moving and removing, and the shoals, deeps, rapids and lay-byes thereby formed, is just what Nature intended Thames fish to enjoy. Make as many deeps by the aid of dredging machines as you may, and, as soon as the dredging ceases, the fish will desert them for one of Nature's making; straighten the river, shear and concrete its banks, fill in the lay-byes, and each and all of those works will most assuredly hasten on the day when the artificial propagation of fish shall become imperative.

I have stated that this is one of the best one and-a-half mile's fishing the Thames can boast of; I would add that it requires more protection than any other; and now let me challenge any man to say that he knows, of his own knowledge, that it has been visited by a river-keeper during the past twelve months. Poaching goes on here, but who remembers a poacher being captured? Let me be just, I remember seeing one caught, and I think it worth your trouble to read how it was done.

Early one morning I was making for my punt which I had left the previous night. As I travelled up I noticed two bank-anglers walking in front; they suddenly stopped and hid themselves behind a bush, in such a manner as left no doubt in my mind that they were watching some one. Behind a tree, close in their rear, I pulled up to wait for the explanation.

Round the corner came a punt, and, lying at full length along the well, with head and shoulders hanging down level with the water, was H——, a notorious thief and poacher. First a jack, and then a barbel, was cleverly snared, and afterwards two more jack were snatched in. Just then the punt caught the stream and travelled too fast for his work. He rose, took the pole, and pushed her into the ditch close to the spot where the two anglers were secreted. They waited until he came on land, and then one of them stood directly in front of him, and asked, "What sport?" The wary poacher smelt a rat, and, as he answered, "Not a fish," he drew from his pocket a quart glass bottle, which he firmly gripped by the neck. "I saw you take several, and in an illegal manner," came, in a stern firm voice, from the man who barred the road. The poacher, with an oath, threatened that he would dash his brains out, if he did not stand aside, and with this he made a step forward with his arm uplifted, and the bottle reached within an inch of his opponent's nose.

One step backwards went the little fellow to free his mouth and nostrils from the too close vicinity of the bottle, so that he might say to his companion, "Stand by, but don't interfere unless I call for help." Then to the man in front of him, from whom his eye had not wandered, "Will you or will you not hand me over the fish and snare?" The answer was another series of oaths, and, as he

uttered them, he advanced another step and the bottle once more touched the man who barred his way.

The poacher, for a moment, appeared nonplussed at such passive, yet successful, resistance. Here was a man, scarcely more than half his own weight, who had not as yet condescended to raise his hands to ward off the threatened blows. It was inexplicable to me, until I noticed the self-satisfied gleam in the eyes. I then felt that there was no need of assistance, the bully had most assuredly fallen in with a trained boxer.

After this slight hesitation, H—— seized the man with his disengaged hand, and fairly forced him round out of his way; in doing so he had to partially turn himself, and, as one of his legs was about to pass over the other, lo! they both flew from under him, and he was sprawling on his back. Quick as lightning No. 2 angler seized the bottle, a formidable weapon, and as he hurled it into the river he became a changed man. Up to this time he had been dodging round and round the combatants with a bundle of rods, in such a manner as left a doubt in my mind as to whether he fancied he was forming a ring, or was merely on the look out for a favourable opportunity to charge in aid of his comrade. Now, he had dropped the rods, and was rubbing his hands in delightful anticipation of what would follow.

In an instant H—— was upon his legs again,

and, as I saw his ferocious, bloodthirsty look, I made a step or two forward in my fear lest he had armed himself, from his pocket, with a worse and more cowardly weapon than a bottle. No, it was with clenched fist that he made an attempt at a running blow; but it's oncoming had been seen by the intended victim, and the brute's impetuosity was utilised to bring him once more violently to the ground. He rose, and blindly rushed at, and closed with, his man, but he was soon to discover that he could not strive at close quarters.

Vainly he attempted to thrust his antagonist to arm's length with his left that he might strike with his right, but each and every struggle tended to perfect the grip of his lithesome wrestling opponent. The angler weighed him across his buttock and let him gently back upon his legs, as I have seen professional wrestlers do. He was evidently satisfied, for almost instantly H—— was turning a somersault, and, as he came down on his back upon the ground, the wrestler fell on him with a dull, squashy thud, that plainly said, "it's all over."

As I made a slight circuit to avoid the three men I saw H——, lamb-like, submitting to have his poaching pockets rifled of the barbel and jack.

The poacher did not meet the magistrates over the matter—"cherchez la femme." He gave up poaching, and took a fancy for poultry, and was

discovered early one morning by an inquisitive constable with a full sack. On being questioned as to its contents, he said it was firewood, and, on an inspection being made, the constable was satisfied. The sack was shouldered and off he walked, and clean off he would have got, had not one of the ten dead ducks, which were at the bottom, had sufficient life to give an unmistakable "quack," "quack."

The lady could not save him this time, and he had to go into retirement. He left behind him in Wraysbury a wife (a much respected little woman) and young family whom everyone did their best to befriend.

The shallow round the high bank will be sure to afford sport to the summer chub-fisher who knows how to work. I have taken numbers by throwing in a handful of soaked bread, which, on reaching the water, will break up and swirl round in the little eddies formed by the sandy clay-lumps which have fallen from the bank. The bread will put the fish on the alert for the more substantial piece which should follow on the hook.

The pollard at the bottom, which is growing out a little above the ordinary level of the river, hangs over a capital bank swim. Slide down some eight feet, and you will be landed on a miniature platform with a good seat formed by the roots of the tree; there is just sufficient space to stow your lumber; do away with two or three joints of your long rod,

and you will be able to catch fish of all kinds directly under your feet. Don't be in a hurry to leave this spot; sit quietly, smoke a pipe, look well about, and, tell me, did you ever fish a snugger, prettier swim in all your life?

JACK.

I have stated that the tail and inner side of the island is the home of a number of jack and perch. I may, without fear of exaggeration, say that the quiet water extending from this spot to the next bend—about 400 yards—is the best piece of public jack-water within twenty miles of here, and has, without doubt, produced more large fish than any other.

Had I space I would tell you something of the monsters that have been taken, and a little about a brace that will some day be caught, I hope, fairly with the hook.

Pike and Jack are synonymous with me. It is a solitary animal and chooses a home amongst rushes, weeds or other cover, from which it can strike at any passing prey, and whence it can come forth when hungry to roam over its hunting ground until satisfied. It is the least particular of Thames fish, and will take almost anything that has life, only limiting its seizures to the capacity of its gullet, and liable to miscalculation even in this.

Given the opportunity it will so gorge itself as

not to require food for several days, during which time it will lie up in its weedy haunt in a semi-torpid state quite reluctant to move tail or fin.

From the middle of April to the second week in May these fish are gathered together in the most favourable spots—beds of rushes if there are any—to propagate their species. After that they again disperse to their old haunts and habits until the Winter's floods destroy their homes and they have to seek for the rest they so much covet, when not on the prowl, in back eddies, at the tail of islands, under banks that have overhanging branches that break the river's rush; indeed, behind any and every cover they can find, as they are too lazily inclined to stem the stream.

To weedy ponds, or deep lakes, where there are huge fish you desire to catch, you should take a can of the biggest dace procurable and use them alive, with a lead to sink them to two thirds of the depth, and a float to keep them from going deeper.

The most sportsmanlike and pleasurable way to catch this fish, in the Thames, is by spinning, and should you be fortunate enough to find the water clear and the weeds all gone on some mid-winter's day, when the wind is softening after a night's hard frost and there is a ripple on the water, you will ever after that spin for pike.

When these fish are on the feed nothing puts them off. I have hooked the same fish or, rather,

I should say, he has had my bait in his mouth a dozen times, and, although I have sometimes struck with violence sufficient to pull him entirely from his course yet, when near me, he has released the bait from his sharp-toothed powerful jaw and retired a few yards, and taken the bait again at my next cast.

You cannot therefore strike too hard or often while the fish is running from you, but be quite gentle when he is coming, or you may render him valuable assistance while he is shaking his head with wide-open mouth trying to get free.

At times, especially when the water is very clear, a natural bait is the most killing, but, as a rule, a Spoon or the Combination Spoon and Phantom will allure them. The rod must be stiffer and stronger than that used for Trout so that you may strike with such vigour as will move the bait from the tight grip with which a pike holds his prey and give the hooks a chance to get a hold of him. There are a number of good bank swims on each side between this and the ditch, where the water flows gently enough for the laziest of roach, and where the most fastidious of Lea and Thames fishermen may suit themselves.

I must say a word or two about the tricks that are played with the said ditch.

In flood-time the fish head up here for shelter and food and then, when the flood has slightly subsided, they are at the mercy of those who come

Photo by] THE ELM TREE SWIM. [*W. K. Geen.*

for them, and Preservation Societies need to hasten much to race the poachers in the getting of them out of these.

In this particular spot of which I write the fish were often the prey of a set of poaching rascals, who laid their flue net, first across the mouth of the ditch, and, having gone up some distance, drove the fish down into the net with long poles. It was then taken up, emptied, and refixed higher up and another length was similarly treated.

It's seldom that elms consent to have their roots washed by the Thames; the clump before us on our left has done so for many scores of years and cast its grateful shade in summer, and welcome shelter in winter, over the fortunate anglers who have fished the two pitches known as the Elms Swim. No matter that the water be high, I promise dry foothold and a quiet corner for the floats. Don't forget your worms, as you may fairly expect a few good perch. Are you afraid of ghosts? If so, don't come, for as sure as spirits are permitted to revisit the scenes which they loved while in the flesh, so surely will old Mortimer's spirit hover about these trees.

A few years since you might have had the pleasure of meeting here the most extraordinary enthusiast that ever lived. Here he fished in his prime, a tall stalwart man; twenty years made no difference in him, he continued to fish his favourite swim with the best of tackle. Another twenty

years passed and the hale, hearty man still did the journey from Putney to Wraysbury for a day's fishing. Why need I speak of the journey? It was nothing to him at seventy; he said nothing of it ten years later, but some of us who knew and respected him fancied his tackle was not so fine and his rod not so long and tapering as it used to be.

The last time I saw the grand old man of eighty years was as he stood close by here up to his knees in snow, anxiously watching the float, which, I had noticed, grew larger year by year. Yes, old Mortimer is dead, and the Elms Swim is "To be Let."

Before us is a stretch of shallows where chub and dace congregate to scour and where a trout or two of small size are sometimes taken.

On the opposite side is the meadow adjoining Old Windsor Lock, where several good bank swims can be found, but I would advise anglers not to visit them in Winter, as a flush of water makes them unfishable.

Stretching across the river, just above the lock, are the foundations of the old weir; should you desire to take a barbel in July—they are scarcely worth taking then—bait well with greaves twelve yards up stream, about two-thirds of the way across, and you will soon be amongst them. Probably you will find your take varied with other fish and among them some good dace which are very fond

of greaves. I have had some pretty bags of this fish from this spot and he makes good sport.

Dace.

If quantities be wanted, if so many dozens are your mark, go to the lower river between Teddington and Richmond and admire the skill with which your fisherman will keep the swim alive with soaked bread and bran, or rake, and help you to learn the knack of keeping on your hook the neatly cut square of bread-crust until the proper striking moment.

You will enjoy such a day and will return home with the feeling that you have mastered a difficult lesson, one which often brings great success in the capture of both dace and roach.

I prefer up-river reaches and larger fish. I choose a fairly strong stream where there is from 4 to 6 feet of water with an even bottom, or where it shallows off towards the end of the swim. For ground-bait soak bread in the water in which greaves have been simmered, mix the bread with bran and chopped greaves, and make this compound into small balls with sufficient clay to take them to the desired spot. Then bait your small hook with white pieces of greaves, and you will often get good takes of dace, with a roach or two and, perhaps, some barbel if there be any near.

Try a worm occasionally for other fish that

may have been attracted, and thus get quite a mixed bag.

We are now at the end of the Old River and my pleasant task is done.

I hope that what I have written may assist the reader in his special quest. Be that as it may, let me wish him luck whether he fishes in Ireland, Scotland or the Home Counties.

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